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AMERICAN BOY SEA STORIES

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AMERICAN BOY ADVENTURE STORIES

AMERICAN BOY SPORTS STORIES

AMERICAN BOY SEA STORIES

with an introduction by
GRIFFITH OGDEN ELLIS

DOUBLEDAY & COMPANY, INC.
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FOREWORD

The American Boy Magazine was founded on the principle that a boy's mentality is entitled to respect. In selecting stories for the magazine, we have held to the belief that the boy should have just as good fiction —as gripping and convincing action, as truthful a portrayal of character, and as authentic atmosphere—as his older brother, or his father. This book of sea stories, taken from *The American Boy,* exemplifies the new standard of excellence that prevails in boys' fiction of to-day. It takes you into the wet world of seas and ships, a world of salt spray and singing ropes, with all the reality of actual experience.

GRIFFITH OGDEN ELLIS,
Editor of *The American Boy.*

The story, "*The Wreck of the Mail Steamer*" by Sir Wilfred T. Grenfell is used by permission of, and by arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company.

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HALF AN HOUR

BY MITCHELL V. CHARNLEY

GOT to wait for half an hour?
Missed the trolley? Say, that's tough.
Have to sit and watch the ocean—
And she isn't even rough!
Can't say that'll be so thrilling.
Here's the trouble with the sea:
Waves just roll, and break, and vanish—
No originality!

Well, I guess we'll have to stand it.
Yes, the bay *is* blue to-day.
Funny, though—those clouds up yonder
Seem to paint one corner gray.
There's a fisher—he's no coward,
Floating in his dinky ship.
Don't think *I'd* much hanker after
Riding breakers on a chip!

What? Those clouds? They *do* look closer—
Rain, by George, beyond his boat!
Wind is tuning up, too—ripping
Waves to spray at every note!
S'pose the fellow knows what's coming?
Hey, there, Mister! Hey! Look keen!
Good—he's pulling for the shore now!
But that bay's a wicked green!

And the rocks right down below us—
What a chance of weath'ring those!
Look—the waves go pounding through them,
Smashing white like swirling snows.
Can't he see them? Can't we help him?
Can't he hear their crashing roar?
Hey, there! Hey! Look out behind you!
He can never make the shore!

Whew! He did it! Passed 'em safely—
Slipped between 'em like an eel!
Bet he'll not forget the scare, though—
What? He's grinning? Man of steel!
And the ocean's smiling with him—
There's the rainbow with the shower.
Water's blue off there—the trolley!
Have we been here half an hour?

AMERICAN BOY SEA STORIES

THE BOY IN THE SILVER SHIP

The Thrilling Story, in Fiction Form, of Lindbergh's Daring Flight

BY THOMSON BURTIS

"SLIM" Lindley's six feet two of lanky gristle and bone was draped in a chair in the office of the Robinson Aircraft Corporation. One long leg was thrown over an arm of the chair, and a newspaper had dropped to the floor. His steady blue eyes were resting on the wall before him, but he did not see the wall itself. He seemed to be looking far into the distance, watching the creatures of his imagination as they took shape, and then dissolved, in endless procession.

He did not even hear Major Robinson, his boss, when he entered the office. The peppery little major grinned as he saw his chief pilot—dreaming again. The major was not only commanding officer of the National Guard outfit in which Slim was a captain, but he was also the president of the company that had the contract to fly mail between Chicago and St. Louis.

Robinson's eyes dropped to the forgotten newspaper, and a headline leaped out at him from the pages. "Commander Fowler, North Pole Flyer, Will Attempt Paris Flight for Orteig Prize."

His sharp-featured face lighted up again with that flashing smile.

"Thinking of flying to Paris?" he demanded cheerily.

Lindley's head turned slowly, and for a second he seemed to be still in the grip of his imagination. Robinson, gazing into his eyes, felt, for the hundredth time, a sense of bewilderment in the presence of his twenty-five-year-old employee. Sometimes there was something uncanny in that clear gaze——

"Oh, I'd like to, sure," Lindley said, and as his eyes focussed on the major's, a shy, half-shamed grin lit up his tanned face. He pushed the tousled blond hair back from his forehead with the diffidence of a boy who is embarrassed because someone has discovered a secret place in his heart.

"Well, twenty-five thousand bucks is a lot of money," laughed Robinson as he sat down at his desk. "But thirty-six hundred miles is a lot of miles—and the Atlantic is quite a puddle!"

"Uh-huh. But it can be done."

"Oh, it will be some day, sure."

"Bill Maloney—friend of mine who's got a little airplane factory out in San Diego—has the best ship for the job, too. Just change the design a little—more gas, a little more wingspread to carry it——"

Robinson whirled around and looked deep into the clear young eyes before him.

"What makes you say that? Been investigating?"

Again that bashful grin crept across Lindley's clean-cut face.

"Uh-huh," he said slowly. "Been looking up all kinds of ships and motors—just to pass the time away."

As though uncomfortable beneath the gaze of his boss, he got to his feet. His blue suit was far from well pressed, and the bottoms of the trousers were not very close to the tops of his shoes. His slight stoop didn't help the fit of his coat, either. Somehow, clothes were just a necessary evil to Slim. He never thought about appearance.

He smiled again, a curiously wistful smile, and said casually:

"Well, I'll run along and test Number 3. If I stay here you'll kid the pants off me."

Robinson chuckled, but his eyes were unusually bright as he said:

"I suppose you've got everything figured out. You would have. Even your navigator——"

"I wouldn't take one."

"What? Say, air castles are all right, but even *they* can be too foolish, young fellow! Why——"

"I wouldn't want another fellow to risk his neck on me," Lindley said calmly. "And it would spoil the design I've got figured out. Gosh!" His face expanded in a broad grin that narrowed his eyes and seemed to spread from ear to ear. Deep in those eyes, though, there was unutterable longing. "If this isn't good! Here I'm laying down the law—you and I arguing about a navigator to Paris just before I test an Air

Mail ship. We'll be fighting about where to stop in Paris next!"

Robinson laughed with him, but the aggressive little pioneer in the business of flying asked several more questions, too. There was no doubt that the boy had thought and figured for months—he had every detail of his dream flight fixed in his mind.

Somehow, the little discussion made Slim's heart a bit heavier, as he walked to the hangar. He strolled along absently, and again there was a vision in his eyes. Why think of it? He, a two-hundred-dollar-a-month mail pilot! A twenty-five-year-old kid with just two thousand dollars in the world! Nevertheless, his mind clung to the prospect. If he achieved the flight, every ambition he'd ever had would come true. He would have made a forward step in the conquest of the air —the game that had been his passion since boyhood. And there would be money and fame enough to enable him to go into the airplane business for himself, build the ships he dreamed about, show the world what possibilities there were in the air.

He'd like a chance to blaze a few new trails—Lord, he'd give his right arm for the mere opportunity to do it! And Bill Maloney and the boys, struggling along out there in San Diego for the love of the game that was in them, they'd become rich, perhaps, and famous. Then the whole bunch could get together, and together they'd solve some problems and take some chances and maybe leave a few landmarks in the march of aviation to its rightful place in the world. And his mother would be happy to see his dream come true—quietly proud, and happy——

"Be yourself," Slim chided the dreamer inside of him, and forced himself to concentrate on his inspection of the big De Haviland that he was to test.

At that same moment Robinson, his whole being afire with the enthusiasm that had suddenly been born in him, was rushing downtown. Ten minutes later, he was closeted with Harry Keightly, a chubby, good-natured and rising young banker. First Keightly guffawed, then listened smilingly, and finally was leaning forward as the fiery Robinson, his keen face fairly twinkling, pounded his points home.

"Honest, Harry, if there's a man living that has the combination to make it, Slim's the man! He's lived, breathed, thought aviation since he was knee-high to a grasshopper! Know what he did? Worked with flying circuses, as a parachute jumper, just so he could pick up flying free from the pilots. He's lifted himself by his own bootstraps, I tell you! He was born for the air. Why, he enlisted in my National Guard outfit as a private, simply to be around the motors and ships he loved! I made him take the army course at Kelly Field, and he turned out a wonder—not only as a flyer, but on aerodynamics and motors and all that stuff. He thinks, studies it, figures it—it's his whole life, I tell you. Just destined for it!"

"Most men," Keightly agreed thoughtfully, "would have built a few air castles about this Paris flight and let it go at that. He's got everything thought out, has he?"

"Right down to his motor and how much gas he'd need!"

"But he's only a kid——"

"What of it? He isn't my chief pilot and a captain in the National Guard because he's good looking, is he? And anyway he's an old man in air experience. Why, the son-of-a-gun has made more parachute jumps, under all kinds of conditions, than some flyers have hops! He doesn't drink or smoke, is as healthy as a horse—and I'll swear he's more at home in the air than he is on the ground. He doesn't care for girls, and likes to be alone, so he can putter around his ships and just soak himself in aeronautics.

"And—and—I don't know—it's hard to describe——" the major was groping for words to express an intangible something he had always felt.

"It's like this," he started again. "Sometimes, I get the feeling that he's sort of a—a man of destiny, if you get what I mean. He's been through so much, and all, that he's got a subconscious feeling that he has the air licked—and you feel that. Put him in a ship, and you just feel that he can do anything, get anywhere—see what I mean? He's in his own element. Sometimes when you get a look at his eyes—you have a funny feeling——"

"Oh, quit going into spasms, old man!" interrupted Keightly suddenly, and his laugh was a joyous bark. The flame of Robinson's enthusiasm had kindled a conflagration in the banker's own soul. "I'm for it—it'll be great for St. Louis, and if the kid makes it—say, I'd do a hornpipe down Jefferson Boulevard!"

A half-dozen flying visits to various business men, during which the enthusiasm of the pair swept aside objections as though they were flies, and Robinson was breaking speed laws on his way back to the field. Twi-

light was falling, and a mail plane was droning overhead as it pointed through the thickening shadows for Chicago. Lindley's tall body was discernible through the dusk, as he walked slowly toward the office. Electric lights winked on, and in the wan light that filtered through the office windows, the two men met.

" 'Lo, Chief. Why out here so late?" queried Lindley.

"Listen, son," Robinson said slowly, and suddenly the leaping fire within him fell to a warm glow. He felt, for the first time during that hectic afternoon, the real meaning of what he was going to say. "Brace yourself, Slim. I've raised twenty-five thousand dollars, which you said was enough. It's yours, boy—you're on leave, starting right now. Get your ship, get to New York, and get under way for Paris—you're the St. Louis entry for the Orteig Prize!"

"What?"

It was a savage, vibrant bark. Lindley's big body was as motionless as though it had been carved from stone. For the moment his mind was a swirling whirlpool. He strove to speak, and could not. Beneath a star-studded sky the two men were like statues, save for Lindley's hair, ruffled by the breeze.

Suddenly his body slumped weakly.

"Lord," he whispered, and then one long arm shot out and his hand gripped Robinson's arms in five tentacles of steel.

"Chief—you're not kidding me, are you?"

"No!"

Lindley's arm dropped, and then Robinson's eyes shifted, as though he could not bear to look into the

glowing ones of his pilot. Lindley, his whole being a riot of joy, nevertheless felt his mind ranging far ahead, out of his control. San Diego—New York—beneath him the vast Atlantic——

"Chief," he said slowly, "I just—can't talk now. Would you mind if I came in in a few minutes?"

"Sure, boy," nodded Robinson, and went inside.

During the next ten minutes, he glanced frequently out the window. Lindley was standing there, head thrown back and his hair tossing in the wind. It was as though he were a son of the stars, seeking strength from them, and counsel.

For a moment, the serious-minded, thoughtful young flyer felt as though the high gods of the air had reached down and touched him, commissioning him to plant their banner at the next milestone along the path of conquest.

And then, suddenly, the blood of the Vikings, whose scion he was, started surging and pounding through his veins, and it was an exultant, transfigured young adventurer who made the long distance telephone wires sing as he talked to Bill Maloney, on the coast. And the train, next day, carried out of St. Louis a youth whose whole being was suffused with a quiet, glowing happiness. The three-day journey was at once an eternity, and yet only a moment, as he spent every hour of wakefulness in going over and over the task that lay before him.

In San Diego, Mr. William Maloney, chief designer and test pilot of the Bryan Aircraft Corporation, met him at the train. The long ride had settled the young

flyer's mind, somehow, and he saw clearly the almost insurmountable obstacles which lay between him and his goal. It was Lindley who somewhat subdued the exuberance of his friend, and Lindley who insisted:

"Come on, Bill. No parties or that stuff. Let's go to bat right now!"

And go to bat they did—the young designer, the manager, and the department foreman of the small, struggling factory that represented the faith of three young airmen, still in their twenties. There were long-drawn out technical arguments lasting far into the night, as inch by inch the construction of the special Bryan monoplane was gone over. Finally, it was decided that Lindley's ideas were good, with but one exception. The oversize gas tank would be switched to a position in front of the pilot, instead of behind him.

The forty craftsmen in the Bryan factory went to work. Day and night, almost, the quiet Lindley was in the factory, watching while careful hands wrought every part of the ship that was to be his own. As it took shape under his eyes, it seemed to become a part of him. He was a man of but one idea, and no dinner party in San Diego had him as a guest. He trained like an athlete preparing for a race—diet, exercise, rest, all under a rigorous regime which he had set for himself.

With every passing day, the headlines in the papers grew more plentiful as three great ships, with three world-famous pilots and navigators, prepared for the test. Over in France, the glorious French hero, Cap-

tain Nungesser, was grooming his *White Bird* for the flight. The world was unaware that Slim Lindley, out in San Diego, was working and dreaming, too, and Lindley was glad that it was so.

The ship was practically completed when he awakened one morning to catch his breath as he read:

"Nungesser and Coli Start!"

All that day he hoped and prayed that they would make it. For the only hours since that eventful evening in St. Louis, his own task failed to interest him. And as day followed day, and the conviction strengthened that two more pioneers of the air had lost their lives in a glorious gamble, Lindley's eyes seemed to grow more brooding, and the lines to deepen on his face. To the first curious questioner who asked him:

"How do you feel about it now?" he answered simply:

"It's part of the game, of course."

Back on Long Island, the chunky yellow Bellanca monoplane was almost ready to start, and the great three-motored Fokker was commencing its last series of tests when Lindley, his hair blowing in the wind and his eyes glowing like stars, came out to the Bryan field and saw his ship, ready to fly. It was a surprise—he had not expected that it would be completely assembled until the next day.

He walked over to it silently—the trim silver craft that had come to be the most important thing in his life. He touched it tentatively here and there, caressing its tubular steel fuselage and sturdy wings. Almost every man in the factory was there, and for some reason they were silent as they watched his face.

"Want to test her yourself?" Bill Maloney asked him, and Lindley nodded. Funny, but he didn't want to have any other hand but his own on the stick of the *Spirit of St. Louis.*

It was he who warmed up the two hundred horsepower radial engine, and listened to the song of its nine mighty cylinders as though it were the music of the gods. And it was he who exultantly lifted the monoplane from the earth for the first time, and felt it rush buoyantly through the air as though overjoyed to be free at last.

He got a grip on himself, finally, and for two hours, he put it through its paces.

"It'll be noseheavy with all the gas aboard," he decided, "but not too much so. Can't get over that."

Every moment, as it played through the air like a shining silver dragonfly, he grew more confident of the wisdom of its construction. Ahead of him were the great gas tanks which would hold 425 gallons of gas. The ship would weigh 5,000 pounds then. The tanks were cut away at the bottom—just enough to give space for the rudder. Five feet had been added to the span of each wing to lift the extra weight, and now the forty-six foot wing was functioning perfectly—there was no wing-heaviness, or lack of stability. Adjustable stabilizer, periscope to give him forward vision, two small windows cut in the sides of the completely enclosed cockpit, the specially built instruments clustered conveniently in front of him—he was sampling the fruit of his years of study, and found it good. There was a space for food at his feet, and space for a life raft back in the fuselage. The small windwheel

to run the generator of the earth inductor compass was set on top of the fuselage, the generator underneath it.

He sideslipped into the field to take advantage of his direct vision out of the windows alongside his head. Five feet from the ground, the ship was level, and with a few brief looks through the periscope to see that all remained clear ahead, he landed it, peering at the ground through the window.

As he climbed out of the door, his eyes met Maloney's, and suddenly his face was transfigured by a smile. Then:

"O.K., Bill. Now let's load her up and see."

Fifteen minutes later he was in the air again, three hundred and fifty gallons of gas in the tanks. She'd be noseheavy—no doubt about that——

"But she'll carry the gas to get me there!" he told himself, and then exultation left him, somehow. His ship was under him. All that mechanical ingenuity could do, had been done. Barring some break in the rhythmic roar of that thrice-tested motor in front of him, there was but one obstacle between San Diego and Paris. That was Slim Lindley. It was up to him, and him alone, now. And as his task loomed directly ahead of him, a very serious young man, with his eyes looking five thousand miles into the distance, stepped from the cockpit and said simply:

"I'll leave to-night, I guess, so as to get to St. Louis in the morning."

He never left his ship that day, except to eat. It seemed to supply companionship more precious than that of any human being. And when, at exactly five

minutes of six that night, the *Spirit of St. Louis* left the ground its pilot scarcely noticed the cheers of the crowd—cheers that had an undercurrent of deadly seriousness. A continent lay between him and the start of his real task—an annoying distance that he was impatient to span. Over on the Atlantic coast three great ships were impatient to be gone; he must be on the ground with them.

He set his course by the floating compass and the earth inductor, and as he held the needle of the inductor on zero, the time seemed to pass in a sort of dream while he communed with himself over the mission he had undertaken. Darkness fell as the silver ship flashed through the sky, five thousand feet high, and he seemed to be alone in the world. It was the feeling he loved, and somehow as the hours passed, his whole being seemed to become placid, and his mind quieted.

Arizona glided beneath him, then New Mexico. Far ahead, he saw the Rockies looming darkly, and he sent his ship climbing steadily upward to sixteen thousand feet as it hurdled those majestic peaks. Southeastward was Santa Fe, a fairy city of gleaming light. A slice of the Panhandle of Texas, then Oklahoma—and soon after dawn had revealed the earth below him, he knew he was roaring along above Missouri. As St. Louis came into sight ahead of him, he smiled a slow smile. That solitary vigil had matured him, and he felt not at all like a daring adventurer of the air, as he slipped his ship into the familiar field and felt his hand crushed between both of the major's.

He was surprised at the crowd that had gathered,

and at the front pages of the evening papers that soon littered the streets of St. Louis. And, somehow, the enthusiasm of the city that had sponsored his ship did not seem very important. His mind was centered within himself. It seemed strange that people should esteem it a great feat to have flown 1,550 miles, at night, in fourteen hours and five minutes. He smiled his bashful smile, and seemed to try to efface himself, when a ring with flying insignia, a gold horseshoe and rabbit's foot, were given to him at dinner that night. He longed to be alone, as though quiet meditation would help fit him for his task.

Not even Major Robinson's entreaties that he stay over a second day to be the guest of honor at a huge dinner could move him. At eight o'clock in the morning he left, and seven hours later, as he spiraled down over Curtiss Field, his heart was bounding within him.

"We're here, old girl," were the words his lips formed as he unconsciously patted the side of his ship.

During those lonely hours in the air he had come to feel that the roar of the motor was the voice of a friend, pouring words of comfort and encouragement upon him, and that he and his ship were one.

He forgot the crowd, then, that surged below him around the hangars, as his eyes caught the sheen of silver water. He was at the rim of the Atlantic which they—he and his ship—were to try to conquer.

He still seemed to be gazing with his mind's eye over the Atlantic when he landed. And as he tumbled from the cockpit to the deafening salvo of cheers, he was like a boy at a surprise party.

"What's the excitement?" he thought dazedly, and

when it was borne in on him that the lanky stranger who had nonchalantly crossed a continent as a prelude to crossing the Atlantic was the reason for the presence and enthusiasm of ten thousand people, he was incredulous.

It was pleasant, but unimportant. As he saw his ship housed in a hangar, and then as he worked over it for a few minutes, wiping it down lovingly, the crowd behind the ropes seemed far away. Chambers and Bert Accord and Commander Fowler, world famous airmen that they were, he greeted with shy admiration. It seemed presumptuous of him to compete with them —and then, as he showed them his ship, the trim craft made him forget his humility. It was disloyal even to think that it was not up to its task—if he were up to his.

At the other airmen's invitation, he inspected the great three-motored Fokker and the chunky yellow monoplane that were being groomed to essay the conquering of the Atlantic. But as he looked them over, and admired them, he was thinking:

"They can't beat you, old girl—they can't!"

And then, in breeches and golf stockings and sweater—the only clothes he had brought with him —he was driven to a Garden City hotel, where he went to sleep. He was tired.

The days went by, and were like so many eternities. The weather reports were uniformly adverse. It would have been madness to send his ship out into the fog and rain and sleet that blanketed the great circle northward that he had made up his mind to follow. Almost every waking hour he spent with his ship. Enthusiastic

crowds swarmed the front of his hangar from dawn to midnight, but they seemed unreal—a fantastic background in his mental world. The *Spirit of St. Louis* was the focal point of that world, and to it he turned for the strength and tranquillity to survive the tension that would never end until he had gone. Sometimes, he took it into the air, to be alone with it, and to listen to its ceaseless song of courage.

Three times it seemed that he could start, and three times he had to stay on the ground as later reports came in. The *White Bird* with its flyers had been given up for lost—and down in Virginia, the third rival of his ship had carried its flyers to death in the sea they were preparing to battle. All the while Lindley, his flyer's heart sorrowful but his spirit unafraid, communed with his ship, and sometimes his hand would rest for a long time on the cap of the propellor hub. On its underside was written:

"We're sure with you."

And every one of the dozens of men who had made it possible for him to create the ship had his name inscribed there.

It was late in the afternoon of his eighth day on Long Island when he scanned with especial interest the weather report that had just been handed to him. He was leaning against his ship, and his eyes stared unseeingly at the crowd, kept away from the hangar by a long barrier of rope, and guards. Fog all the way up the coast, and overhead there was a chill gray mass of clouds from which the rain dripped ceaselessly. And yet, in that report, there was hope. Clearing expected within twenty-four hours, the report read. Out over

the Atlantic, conditions were excellent.

For many minutes he stood there, and all the time he knew what he would do. Nevertheless, he tried to think things through. It seemed that conditions would never be perfect—if the Atlantic was clear, Newfoundland would be foggy. He felt that he was being impelled, by some influence which he could not comprehend, to decide to go, that night.

Suddenly he turned to Frazier, one of the mechanics who had been put at his disposal by the Curtiss Company.

"Let's get her ready, anyhow," he said, smiling slightly. "Put in the gas, eh?"

The weather-beaten mechanic glanced at him, something of awe in his eyes.

"Yes, sir," he said, and in a moment he was busy at the drums of special high test gasoline that Lindley, after careful tests, had ordered sent on from the coast.

The word spread like wildfire: "Lindley may leave to-night." If any of the crowd left the field that night, there were ten persons to take the place of each one who went home. Slim stayed in the hangar with his ship. The rain seemed to be lessening slightly with every passing hour. Those weather reports might be accurate, at that. He had a hunch that he was going to leave——

"I'm going to run to the hotel, and get a little rest," he said to Frazier, abruptly. "Be back in a little while."

It was nearly midnight, and he felt that he wanted to be alone. Back in the hotel, he lay down on the bed, staring wide eyed at the ceiling. For two hours he lay

there—two hours that ticked by in a sort of waking dream. He knew, somehow, that he was going to start, and as the adventure of which he had dreamed lay directly before him, there was no exultation, nor any fear. It was as though he were communing with the flyers' gods, humble before them.

At two-thirty, he got to his feet slowly, and methodically drew on his woollen sweater. In golfing knickers and stockings, the sweater over a flannel shirt, and his blond hair tousled, as usual, he went downstairs. Ten minutes later, he was entering his hangar. The fog was thick, and still dripping moisture. Tightly packed thousands watched him, as he conferred briefly with his crew.

"Those afternoon weather reports will be sixteen hours old by daylight," he remarked as though talking to himself. "I think this fog is lifting, as they said—and that it'll be clear to the north."

They watched him silently. To one side, Commander Fowler watched, without saying a word. Lindley straightened, and his blue eyes shone brightly, as the hint of a smile flashed across his lips.

"Let's get her over to the runway," he said briefly.

As police cleared a line through the dense crowd to make room for the truck, there came from the crowd a low, buzzing drone. It was as though they felt it would be sacrilege to raise their voices. Lindley himself, his eyes those of a man who is gazing at a distant vision, helped lift the tail of his beloved ship, and fasten it to the back of the truck. He lashed it there tenderly, and then, in an official car, followed

the truck as it rolled slowly through the wan gray night.

Across the field, over the road, and on to Roosevelt it went, and there, at the head of the runway, Slim himself released the tail of the plane, and helped ease it to earth. The police had no trouble in holding back the swarming thousands of shivering, mist-drenched onlookers.

It was nearly five o'clock when he made a last inspection of the trim craft that had come to be the center of his existence. Life raft and water purifier in place, back in the fuselage; five sandwiches and two canteens of water hung behind where his head would be! army rations for seven days. His eyes roved from the all-metal propeller to the specially built cluster of instruments: oil pressure gauge, airspeed indicator, turn and bank indicator, to tell him whether he was flying straight or turning, and a climb indicator. On the lower line, a fuel gauge, tachometer, temperature gauge, altimeter, and electric clock. His compasses were to one side.

All was ready.

"Here's the weather chart, sir."

He turned, and his aides clustered about him—Mix, of the instrument company, Hewell, government weather expert, and his mechanics. Commander Fowler, greatest of air navigators, was by his side, and Chambers, whose yellow monoplane was also loaded and ready to go, was nearby. Chambers had already decided not to attempt it that day.

Lindley's mouth was dry, his throat parched, as

he studied the chart. A few pointers from Hewell, given huskily, died away into dead silence.

Suddenly Lindley's hand crumpled the chart in a viselike grip. It was as though someone outside of himself was making the decision.

"I'll go," he said simply. "Warm her up, eh, Frazier?"

He got into the back seat of a car. He did not feel like talking. The motor roared into life. For three minutes it fired rhythmically, and then Frazier turned it off.

"O.K., sir," he nodded.

It would be a few minutes yet before it was light enough to go, and those minutes Lindley spent in the rear seat of the deserted car. His hand wandered to the pocket where he had tucked a brave message of encouragement from his mother. It was a cheerful, simply worded note, but he understood the depth of feeling behind it.

"The fog *is* lifting," he told himself, and the almost superhuman tranquillity that had flowed into him in the past few hours kept any trace of exultation from his mind.

It was light. There was no more rain, and the fog was lifting every second. He got out, and nodded to Frazier. Again the motor roared into life——

"I wonder if she knows she'll never stop for a day and a half, this time?" Lindley thought, and people marveled at the smile that came to his face.

He looked at the crowd, and dozens of bear-like grips from the men about him fairly crushed his hand.

"Good luck, boy," Accord said huskily, and Cham-

bers, his face drawn and tense, was wordless, but in his handclasp was all the understanding of the brotherhood of the air.

Commander Fowler held his hand for five long seconds. Then:

"So long, Slim. See you in Paris!"

Lindley turned away in an agony of embarrassment. He could not say the things he wanted to say to those great-hearted sportsmen——

The ear shattering roar of the engine died slowly to idling.

"How does she sound?" Lindley asked evenly.

"Sounds good to me," Frazier said, his voice unsteady.

"Then I might as well go," Slim found himself saying, and he was in the cockpit almost before the mechanic was out of it.

His hand eased the throttle forward as the *Spirit of St. Louis* strained against the wheelblocks, wild to be gone. His eyes swept the instruments. Gently, the throttle came back. He took a deep breath, and leaned out the open door.

"Pull the blocks!" he shouted, and then:

"So long, everybody!"

The throttle went forward. Slowly, the overweighted little craft started down the ash runway. Slim was looking through his periscope, his body strained forward over the stick as though to help his comrade along.

The gallant monoplane did its mightiest. He could feel it straining beneath him, and felt that it was a living thing making a super-human effort to do its job.

The soft, rain-soaked earth clung to the wheels. Ahead of him was a gully, then telephone wires.

He rocked it, and felt it answer. He was in the air——

But only for a second. The ship dropped, and again the wheels were held in that clinging embrace. But there was no turning back. Suddenly, there leaped into his vision the half of a propeller thrust into the ground ahead of him—grim reminder of the fate of gallant men who had lost their lives here a year before, starting on the mission he had set himself.

He heaved back on the stick, and again the ship answered. It was staggering through the air, like an overburdened animal weakening under the strain. He must keep it there, or that gully ahead would turn him and his beloved craft into mangled ruins.

It seemed that the indomitable spirit flaming within him flowed through his fingers into the ship. With all his transcendent skill, he fought to keep the ship in the air. One more dip to the ground, and no power on earth could save him. The monoplane staggered drunkenly along—but above the ground.

Foot by foot, with scarcely enough flying speed even to stay level, he forced it upward. He was white, his eyes pools of tragedy, as the telephone wires loomed ahead and above him. Then:

"You did it, you did it!" he whispered weakly, and as the wires, fairly scraping the undercarriage, slid below him, he sank back in his seat. He leveled out a bit, as though resting his ship. A mile ahead were trees. Somehow he knew they would hurdle that obstacle. The test had come, and the ship had been equal

to it. He was not surprised when the slow-climbing ship cleared the trees, and the song of the motor became a hymn of triumph.

As though the gods themselves were smiling, the first ray of sun burst through the thinning clouds.

And to Slim, sitting in his snugly enclosed cockpit like a lone crusader bound for conquest, it seemed that a higher power was clearing the way for him. That coast, which had been fog-bound for days, lay smiling beneath the sun as the fog fairly rolled away ahead of him. At a hundred miles an hour he winged his way along, knowing every second where he was.

Two hours later, he set his course from Scituate, on the shores of Massachusetts Bay, for Nova Scotia. That land flight had seemed like the hops from San Diego—a mere preliminary. Now, as he got half way across on the two hundred mile water jump, he gazed below him at the smiling sea. Ships were here and there——

"But there won't be any, later," he reminded himself.

Fog over Newfoundland, he'd been told. He hoped it wouldn't be too thick. Perhaps there wouldn't be any.

He was unaware of the passage of time. The figures on the clock were meaningless, as far as actual consciousness of what they indicated was concerned. Pervading his whole being was a sort of transcendent exaltation, an exaltation so great that the thought of what lay ahead of him held no terrors. The Atlantic was merely a difficult obstruction, requiring greater concentration to surmount.

Land ahead—Nova Scotia. That would be Meteghan down there, if his earth inductor had not failed. It was. The time was 12:25. Again the flying was easy as he roared up the coast. Halifax, then Port Mulgrave, and the electric clock said exactly four o'clock as he pointed his ship out over the water from the tip of Nova Scotia and sent it hurtling into the misty air that stretched ahead of him.

Now, as the cooling air chilled him and sullen water rolled beneath, his face grew more set, and his eyes held a look of deepened brooding. One more tiny interval over land—and the die would be cast. Five o'clock, six, and about seven he should sight land again—the southern tip of Newfoundland.

The mist was turning into a heavy fog that rolled in from the icy waters of the Grand Banks. Foot by foot, he was forced down, until at last the *Spirit of St. Louis* was darting along less than a thousand feet above the sullenly heaving water. His eyes held almost ceaselessly to his compass, flitting occasionally to his drift indicator.

Nearly seven o'clock—and there appeared in the eye of his periscope a dark line across the sea. He strained forward in his seat.

"Land all right," he told himself thankfully. "It must be Newfoundland."

For a moment he leaned back, relaxed. Then his body stiffened. His ship dropped lower. It was the rugged, bleak looking coast of Newfoundland, but he must find some landmark to set his course by. The fog was so thick he could scarcely see anything. He must find the city of St. John's, if possible. He could, per-

haps, take his bearing from Cape Race, but he wanted to make sure of himself by locating the island's chief town. He swung the nose of the dripping monoplane northward, seeking about like a hound for the scent. The northeast tip of the southern extreme of the island——

Suddenly it burst into view as he flew northward, now less than five hundred feet high as the fog forced him down. There was the bay, and there the small city. Tense as a drawn wire, he circled around it briefly, getting his bearings and setting his course. Then he circled again, methodically figuring what he and his ship had done. Eleven hundred fifty miles in a few minutes less than twelve hours. A favoring wind had helped the overladen ship average a hundred miles an hour, and now it was picking up speed as its tremendous cargo lightened. From his fuel gauge he estimated that he had used gas at the rate of about twelve gallons an hour.

Eastward stretched the Atlantic—nineteen hundred miles of it to Ireland. Again he verified his course. The slightest deviation would mean hundreds of miles off course at the other end of the flight. He had plenty of gasoline, and plenty of oil. Ahead of him, the motor was firing without a break, and below him, his second self, *The Spirit of St. Louis,* seemed to be straining ahead as he pointed it eastward.

His eyes were the eyes of a man in a trance, and his lips worked as his hand caressed the throttle, now at three quarters.

"Here we go," he whispered, as they—he and his ship—hurled themselves into the fog which blotted

out the land as though Newfoundland had been wiped from the earth. Just a few feet below him, huge white-topped waves, like the teeth of a monster lying hungrily in wait for prey, leaped at the ghost-ship. He was utterly alone, save for his ship. Never had a man been so utterly alone. The fog had swallowed up the ship and the man whom the world was watching.

He never dreamed, as he hurtled along through the gradually lightening fog, that he was being borne on the hopes and prayers of three hundred and fifty million people. He did not know that he had scarcely gone fifty miles beyond Newfoundland before the world was aware of the fact that he was out over the sea, nor that in gorgeous theaters men and women were standing in silent prayer for him. He would have been stunned at the mere idea that there was scarcely a home in the western world or a street corner in a town, where his name was not on some one's lips, and his fate close to some one's heart. He would have smiled his bashful, boyish smile, and flushed with embarrassment, had he ever been told that he had gathered within himself the dreams of the world he had left behind, and that he in his silver ship was the physical symbol of what earthbound mortals of the watching world dreamed they would like to be.

He was just a flyer, taking a chance to prove what a ship and a man could do, writing another page in the history of the game he loved, and the only reward he wanted was the opportunity to march in the vanguard of the air.

Momentarily, as his motor roared its song of defiance to sea and fog, he weakened. He found himself

taut and overwrought as his eyes strained into the opaque mist, and saw the darkly brooding spot of water below him rise perilously close.

"Have I got to go through this forever?" he exploded, and it seemed that the strain of fourteen continuous hours in the air had frayed his nerves, and broken the iron control with which he held himself.

"Guess I'll climb," he decided suddenly, and the temporary nervousness was over. He was again the cool flyer, as he thrust the throttle all the way on, and sent his ship upward into a blank wall of mist.

He kept it level, and in a gradual climb, with the help of his banking and climbing indicators. His eyes were on the little bubbles almost constantly. He could not see fifteen feet in any direction. Hunched in his tiny cockpit, with the fog like a shroud about him and the open sea beneath him, he leveled out at five thousand feet, and the song of the motor, dropped into a lower key as he throttled it, was like the voice of a friend from out the limitless loneliness that was his.

A half hour later, and suddenly the silver ship hurled itself out of the fog. Above him was a darkening sky, below him a blue-gray sea that stirred itself in long swells, like a monster, stretching. Stars winked on as the heaven darkened, and the water became a white-splotched floor below him.

He wasn't hungry, but he munched a sandwich—his first food. To his dying day he will never know what that sandwich was made of.

As night fell, shortly after nine o'clock, the motor seemed to run with a smoother rhythm, and the ship, as though to reassure him, was bounding more buoy-

antly through the smooth, icy air. To the north of him, like ghostly rafts, great icebergs glinted in the wan starlight. Then a great, heaving sea of icefloes. And ever the twain—ship and pilot—rushed on into the night, farther and farther from possible rescue, and nearer and nearer to their goal, twenty-two hundred miles away.

Again he was unconscious of the passage of time. Flying was automatic, now, and his sustained exaltation sped the time on wings. He thought of nothing in particular. The consciousness of his goal was always with him, and yet in the background. The roar of the motor had become hypnotic, lulling his senses into a vague dreaminess.

He scarcely looked out the windows, or ahead. Occasionally he gazed down at the water patiently waiting to destroy him, but he rarely thought of what the failure of two of those cylinders ahead of him would mean. His ship would not fail—why, it couldn't! It was his own——

"A ship!" he said surprisedly, and it was almost unpleasant to come out of his trance, and realize what that single winking light meant. The knowledge that below him a boat was plowing through the water brought no sense of comforting safety to him. It brought not even a momentary thrill of companionship. Nothing would, now. He was alone, a demi-god winging his way through the air—and that meant the height of happiness for him.

The light dropped behind, and disappeared back of one of the growing number of white piles that sailed in stately splendor across his path.

Midnight—more than five hundred miles from shore.

"Plenty of gas, plenty of gas!" became the refrain of the Wright as he made a mental calculation from his fuel gauge.

Another light shone through the clear night. Far to the south, some vessel was plowing its own lonely way across the swelling sea.

Another hour passed. Time didn't exist. The sky seemed lightening, while the clouds thickened and grew larger. He was conscious of occasional puffs of wind, too, that sometimes lifted the wings of his ship.

The sky was lightening. The water became lighter as the stars went out, and the clouds seemed to turn to gray.

He looked at his clock unbelievingly.

"Gosh, it hasn't stopped, has it?" was the thought that flashed into his mind.

Had he been five or six hours more than he had thought, out over the sea?

"No, that much gas hasn't been used up—Holy Moses! What a dumbbell I am!" he told himself disgustedly. "Nights are short in this country!"

In a few minutes, he was winging along in broad daylight—and it was not yet two o'clock. But as daylight came, the clouds seemed to mass together in menacing gray piles. Now he was leaning forward, his eyes flitting from compasses to the periscope.

A huge bank of mist lay directly ahead. It would be only a mile or so to go northward, and he could get around it. His eyes on the earth inductor compass and

the clock, he turned his ship and darted along on the very fringe of the cloud. He must turn the ship southward the same number of degrees, for the same length of time, to get back on his course.

As he banked around the cloud, others seemed to be closing in on all sides.

"I've got to go through," he told himself grimly, "or I won't know where I am!"

He turned southward, eyes on the compass, and a few seconds later his ship was swallowed up in the fog. And he had become a drawn, taut mechanism with narrowed eyes and bounding heart as he realized the truth. The sleet rattled against his ship like the continuous roll of musketry, and before his eyes, his wing struts were being coated with ice. A few minutes of that, and the curvature of the wing would change, his ship become unmanageable——

"I've got to dive to melt it—I can't get over!" he thought with sinking heart, and shoved the stick ahead. It would melt, perhaps, at a lower altitude. If it didn't —he thought of himself afloat on his little life raft, and strove to blot the suggestion. Meanwhile, his ship flashed downward at almost two hundred miles an hour.

"Thank goodness for the all-metal prop!" he thought over and over again, as he darted through impenetrable blackness, the hail of the sleet against steel and wood a devil's song in his ears that almost drowned out the challenging drone of the motor. The altimeter dropped swiftly. He was white-faced and tight-lipped, and his eyes looked disaster in the face,

as his ship became right wingheavy—so much so that he had to fight the stick to keep it level.

Fifteen hundred feet—a thousand. He could scarcely control the monoplane, now, and seconds would tell the tale.

He gasped with relief—the relief of a man who has been reprieved from death, as he saw the icy coating of his ship turn to water, and disappear. He was but fifty feet high, the water vague below him as what was now rain brought a million tiny geysers to its surfaces. Now he was down to twenty feet—he had to be, to see.

A few seconds later he leaned forward, hope in his eyes. There was light ahead—but even as he flashed forth from the storm, he knew that his temporary exultation had been premature. All around him were more clouds, from ten thousand feet down to the very water, and on every side. Every one of them was a deadly projectile in the artillery of the air.

So he renewed the fight—the fight that was to seem never-ending. He banked around the first cloud, eyes glued to his compass, and with motor full on, climbed at the same time. Banking and circling, striving to calculate in minutes and degrees the changes in his course in order to compensate for them when he had a chance, he inched his way upward on a tortuous course. Three times, below five thousand feet, he was forced into a few seconds of that deadly rain of sleet and snow, but each time he fought through in time.

Six thousand feet—and there loomed above him, a full fifteen thousand feet high and stretching from

horizon to horizon, a dense wall of black mist. He could never get over it, and again the silver ship rushed downward, and for taut miles he skipped along, barely above the waves that flung themselves upward like wolves leaping at their prey. The rain pounded against the ship, and suddenly a great wave, twenty-five feet high, rushed like a charging monster from out the opaque storm.

He cried out as he pulled the ship back, and as it answered, its undercarriage was wet with the creamy foam that was like teeth on the crest of the water.

Then, as a momentary surcease from the deadly strain, came an interval of a minute during which time he must decide between two things. He was in the clear, but another mass of sleet-filled mist was marching toward him. It was not so high, and he decided to go over it. With the motor roaring its loudest and the tachometer needle wobbling as the ship vibrated, he climbed desperately. Circling and ducking back, chancing a minute of sleet at a time, he worked his way upward. He handled the ship with the matchless skill that was his, as his brain almost unconsciously kept track of his deviations from compass course.

Ten thousand feet high, he sank back, and wiped the beads of icy sweat from his lined forehead. He was above them, but miles ahead, higher ones, their tops scraping the very sky, were coming toward him.

And they never stopped. Hour after tragic hour went by, as he fought his fight. A dozen times he was forced to rush downward through the icy particles which drove against his ship in savage, deadly millions, and then almost to dodge the waves in a driving

downpour of rain. Then up again, fighting for every inch of altitude, making a thousand life-and-death decisions every hour, sometimes attaining a moment's peace two miles in the air, only to see coming toward him, in ceaseless phalanxies, the army of the air. His ship thrown about in the swirling cauldrons of the winds, his body a network of nerves strained to the breaking point, sleepless and without food, he fought until he could fight no longer. Not even the blurred song of the motor that had never failed him could help him now.

"I've got to turn back—I can't make it!" he thought despairingly, as another gargantuan cloud, that seemed to cover the sea and the sky at once, forced him into another heartbreaking fight.

Flesh and blood could stand no more. He was through——

And then it was that the strength he had stored up through the years seemed to well up from some mysterious spirit reserve. The blood of the Vikings, who had conquered the sea a thousand years before, surged hot through his veins. In a sort of sublime madness he flung back his head, and to the great gray monsters who rolled down on the battered, dauntless ship he cried his challenge to do their worst—and fought on.

He felt a ferocious joy in the fight, now. He fairly flung his ship into the teeth of the storm gods, and it seemed that he helped to lift it on. Two hands on the stick, sometimes, to combat the winds that strove to tear it to pieces, cheating the waves that would devour him one minute, and fighting for precious altitude the next, he clung to his course. In the very middle of the

Atlantic, he scarcely realized where he was or what he was doing, as he and his ship fought their great gray enemies, and beat off the billions of missiles that sought to batter them down. A thousand times the ship was almost out of his control, until he gritted his teeth and brought it level in the lower rain.

It was eleven o'clock, but he did not know it, when his bloodshot eyes, peering through the periscope, for a second, before going back to the compass needle, discerned a lightening ahead. He lifted his ship over a wave, and as though to dare the sea, dropped it down again to look. A moment's respite was ahead, he decided, and then another round in the fight that would go on until he and the monoplane were battered into ruins——

He stared ahead stupidly as the plane flashed forth into smiling sunlight shining on an almost tranquil sea. There were great rollers, but they were not pricked by rain. And as far as he could see, there was not a cloud in the sky.

For a moment, he scarcely could comprehend that his fight was over. Utterly spent, he mechanically sent his ship into a climb. His dulled mind began to work. Eleven o'clock—if he was still on his course, within five hours he should sight land.

For the moment, though, that thought meant little. At five thousand feet, he leveled the ship, and munched half of a sandwich. He threw the other half out the window. He had no desire for food. He was so tired——

He caught himself just in time. For a minute or two, he had been flying in his sleep—asleep with his

eyes wide open. He strove to combat the drowsiness that was trying to overcome him. He seemed without feeling, incapable of thought.

"Snap out of it!" he told himself suddenly, and his weary body straightened.

He looked over his instruments, and then it was that something electric seemed to course through his veins. He was on the way to Paris, already only five hours from land. The worst part of the Atlantic was conquered. All that it meant came back to him, and his dull eyes brightened and strength flowed from his mind to his body. And as his eyes rested on the motor cylinders before him, he was ashamed. The ship was no more his brainchild—it was a mighty thing, more worthy of trust than he.

With each minute, his exaltation mounted higher. An hour passed, and as he gazed briefly through his periscope, he leaned forward.

"Land!" he cried aloud, and his heart was pumping like mad.

He had made terrific speed—must have been a strong tail wind——

"Where is it?" he asked himself in bewilderment, as that island he had seen disappeared.

He slumped back into his seat, and then the boyish smile flickered across his drawn face.

"A mirage—and I was crazy enough to believe it," he chided himself. "Wake up, Slim, wake up!"

Two hours that were meaningless chunks of time, and what he saw he knew was no mirage. There were fishing vessels ahead—he must be nearing land!

And then there assailed his suddenly super-stimu-

lated mind, all the dread possibilities to which he had given no thought for hours. He had tried to remain on course—but had he? He might be hundreds of miles from it. But there must be land, somewhere, not too far away.

Impulsively he cut the motor, and sent the ship into a steep dive. For a second he held it in a semi-stall above one of the vessels. Vague white faces looked up at him wonderingly.

"Am I on the road to Ireland?" he yelled at the top of his voice, and then laughed at himself.

"They couldn't hear," he chuckled—an exultant chuckle as he pushed the throttle forward and the motor answered.

He knew he was close to land. He felt that he had finished the flight already. But only for a minute. As he got a grip on himself, and the cool placidity of mind that was normally his, returned to him, he realized that he was still looking over water to the horizon.

Nevertheless, his eye barely left the periscope before him from then on, and he searched the skyline with mounting eagerness. His speed, he dared not try to calculate; the storm had made that impossible. And the thought, which seemed despicable to him, still would recur:

"Suppose the motor should fail—after eighteen hours over the ocean!"

But it did not. When he actually did see land ahead, the motor seemed to lift its song into a pean of triumph, and the ship seemed to increase its speed as though it, too, saw that narrow black line in front of it.

It was no mirage, this time. It was land. A rocky coast.

"Ireland, by the mighty!" the young flyer told himself slowly. "Got to turn south, of course, set my course again, and it's only six hundred miles now."

And 1:30 in the afternoon. In a few moments, his last doubt was dissipated, as the outlines of the shore below him coincided exactly with Dingle Bay.

"That was lucky," he told himself. "Only a few miles off my course, with that storm. And I'm in Europe!"

Starry eyed, the feel of victory within him, he sent his ship higher and rushed along on his nearly completed journey. The short hop to England was made, it seemed to him, in but a moment, and as he sped over the rolling, parklike terrain of Britain, he went still higher to cross the Channel. He felt superstitious about that narrow strip of water, somehow.

"Just my luck to come down in that, now!" he told himself, and laughed then with an almost hysterical exuberance.

"We have won, we have won, we have won," sung the mighty little motor, minute after minute.

As darkness fell, his glowing eyes picked out Bayeaux, near the arm of the Channel noted on his map as Seine Bas.

"An hour and a half more, an hour and a half more," the motor was singing in his ears, and his body was afire.

"Pipe down, big boy, pipe down," he talked to himself. "A forced landing in the dark could cook your goose right now, as easy as the Atlantic could."

And again he was the contained flying man, his joyousness suppressed into a quiet happiness such as he had never known before.

"Now to the Seine River—can't miss it—and Paris!" he thought, and with his whole being set on that goal, the significance of it he temporarily forgot. He just must get there, that was all.

A full fifty miles from Paris, his eyes discerned the lights of it. A slim golden arrow—the Eiffel Tower—beckoned him. Tiny lights that seemed to be rockets danced like fireflies below huge lines of light shooting upward into the black sky. Rockets, and the searchlights of the airdrome.

With his goal in sight, all he could think of was:

"If the motor should fail now!"

But it did not. He was two miles high, because he wanted plenty of gliding distance should the engine that had carried him thirty-six hundred miles without a miss, fail at the end of its cruel strain. And two miles high he still was, as he peered down on the brightly lighted field that he knew must be the La Bourget airport. There were the lights of myriad cars, and a dense black mass that must be people, waiting.

He cut the throttle gradually, so gently that it was like a caress. The motor seemed to die thankfully, as though tired.

And then, winging down silently through the night in graceful spirals, he strove to comprehend what that field below him meant. And he could not. A vision had come true, and all that he had yearned for would be his. His silver plane had become a dream ship that had carried him to the harbor of his heart's desire.

And his eyes were wet as he patted the side of the cockpit, and said huskily:

"You did it, old girl, you did it!"

He landed smoothly, but he was in a trance. Suddenly his body went limp, and he gazed stupidly at a torrent of black figures sweeping across the field toward him. He knew, later, that twenty-five thousand frenzied people had burst all barriers to roll over him in a tidal wave of humanity.

He could not move, it seemed, save to cut the motor dead in order to have the propeller still when those people arrived. As the leaders swept up to him, he thrust his head from the cockpit, and smiled.

"Well, I made it," he found himself saying, but it was scarcely heard by a living soul, he knew.

In a daze, he felt himself lifted from the cockpit, felt himself swaying on the shoulders of a half dozen men, the center of a sea of humanity, mad with excitement. He was dropped, and he fought to keep from being trampled. A sea of faces, indistinguishable words in French battering at his ears, women in tears and men shouting themselves hoarse——

He was whirled about, and saw the crowd around the ship. They were tearing at it—souvenirs——

In a trice his brain cleared, and he found himself shouting:

"The ship, the ship! Don't let them hurt it! Don't let them do that!"

But it was useless. For a second, he felt that he himself was being mangled. But he was helpless. Again he was lifted to the shoulders of strangers. . . .

A car forced itself through the mass that was fairly

hurling his tired body over a surface of hands. Smiling uncertainly, he felt himself whisked into the car, and two French officers were pumping his hand as the auto sped across the field to the commandant's office.

Drawn faced and grimy, hair falling over eyes that were burning with an almost unearthly glow, he sank into a chair. He shook a thousand hands, smiling always, and then a distinguished looking man with a shock of gray hair burst through the men about him and took the flyer's hand in both of his.

"I'm Ambassador Merrick," he said unsteadily, "and—Captain, you're the hero of the whole world this night!"

"Thank you, sir," Lindley said smilingly, "but that's going a little bit too far, isn't it?"

There certainly was a lot of excitement, he thought. It hadn't been such a tough flight, all in all.

A half hour later he was at the Embassy, spirited there as though by magic, safe from the tens of thousands of men and women who would have worn his tired body out with their adulation. Some hot milk, a bath—and the happiest youth in all Christendom had laid himself down to sleep in pajamas belonging to the ambassador of the United States to France.

Gosh, but he was tired. His long legs bent slightly to fit the bed, his hair spread over the pillow, he had time to think.

"Well, I'm here. Everybody sure is marvelous to me. I'll bet Mother, and Billy and the major and the boys get a little kick out of it. I wonder—what—they're doing now——"

The door opened slightly, but the ambassador stop-

ped as he saw the doubled-up figure beneath the bed clothes. Outside, a mob was singing and cheering, but Slim was sleeping like a tired baby. The ambassador closed the door softly.

Three minutes later a message was flashing across the Atlantic, following Slim's own, previously sent message:

"Warmest congratulations. Your incomparable son has done me the honor to be my guest. He is in fine condition, and sleeping sweetly beneath his country's roof."

DOUBLE LOCKS

BY EUGENE CUNNINGHAM

THE third-class cruiser *Shenandoah* made ready for sea. At Pier Five of the Bremerton Navy Yard she lay, a lean white hull with yellow superstructure and black five-inch rifles thrusting deadly noses over the side. Fore and aft, upon her raised forecastle and poopdeck, in the sunken well-deck below and between the two, men were working hurriedly. Stores were coming aboard and stores were being lowered to the dock; sea lashings were being passed on everything movable. The ship fairly hummed.

Dal Hawken, petty officer third class, of the yeoman, or clerical branch, a lean, muscular nineteen-year-old, came running down the forecastle to the ladder leading to the well-deck. With a hand on each ladder rail, he slid to the well-deck and laughed up at the huge boatswain's mate who had followed.

"Now, you stay off this fo'c'sle!" bellowed Porky Bowman angrily. "Do your skylarkin' somewhere else! If I catch you up here again——"

Dal laughed and ran aft to the executive office, where he should have been for the past half hour, hard at work. Under the poopdeck was the little office, with a round air port opening on the quarterdeck. This air port was open and as he neared the office Dal heard

the voices of "Efficiency Mac," the executive officer, and Whittington, the chief yeoman, who was ship's writer and Dal's immediate boss.

"The ship's complement of yeomen has only one vacancy for a second-class," Dal heard Whittington say. "That means a choice between Hawken and Benson. Each is qualified; each has just finished his required year as third-class. Hawken, I think, is brighter, a better stenographer, has the more thorough knowledge of Navy paper work."

"Yes," came "Efficiency Mac's" dry voice, "but Benson is more reliable. Look at Hawken's desk! Piled with work! And he—I saw him a few minutes ago, from the bridge—is on the fo'c'sle with a powder flag wrapped around him, and a bayonet between his teeth, having his picture taken as a pirate! He skylarks up and down the ship like a kid of ten. Intelligence, education, are worth not one small whoop if they don't hook up to the day's job! So if we can rate only one second-class, my choice is Benson!"

Dal's tanned face turned suddenly serious. However much he skylarked, he never lost sight of his one ambition—to finish his enlistment two years from now in chief yeoman's brass-buttoned uniform. To do this, he *must* be advanced to yeoman second, yeoman first, and chief yeoman, exactly at the end of the required year in each rating. Above everything, he had wanted to go back to Dallas holding the highest noncommissioned rank of the Service; show the family that, in spite of the fool prank that had caused his expulsion from High a month before graduation, he could amount to something.

"Efficiency Mac's" contemptuous remark had more than stung, it had amazed Dal. For he had thought himself so much the better yeoman that Cy Benson, the canteen-yeoman, hadn't a chance against him. And now, Cy got the rate! *He* must wait—Josephus Daniels knew how long!—for another vacancy! That meant that his hopes of making chief were *shot!*

Dal didn't care to face the keen-eyed, sharp-tongued Exec just then. Particularly not with empty hands. He slipped down the after-ladder to the berth deck and ran for'ard along the alleyway to the pay office. Cy Benson, checking his lists of canteen stores, looked up and nodded. Cy was serious as a preacher, slow-thinking, conscientious, but a good scout. But Dal was close to disliking his successful rival just then. He grunted, got the pay accounts he wanted, and went sulkily out.

"Transfer pay accounts for the short-timers," said Dal shortly to Whittington. The chief glanced at Dal, then at the papers. Dal caught the queer look and it deepened his sense of injury. What if he did "play flats" a little? Didn't he know his work? Then the thought came—yes, he *knew* his work, but did he always do it promptly and well? He had an uncomfortable feeling that losing out on advancement had been his own fault, after all; that he couldn't pass the buck.

"But the paymaster hasn't signed them," remarked Whittington. "He's in the wardroom. Have him sign and—come straight back, will you, Hawken? We want to get these men transferred; sail at one, you know."

Another dig! Dal knew that *he* should have seen that the accounts were signed. Whittington shouldn't

have to check all his work. And he wasn't reliable; he had to be told to come straight back, like a child sent on an errand.

As he stepped outside and turned through the watertight door into the dim cabin country, he collided forcibly with the form of "jack-o'-the-dust" Bundy, the ordinary seaman in charge of provisions storerooms. Bundy, grunting, grinned maliciously, screwing up his shifty black eyes and tobacco-stained mouth.

"Ho, there, Yeoman," he mocked. "Late again for something? Watch out for *me,* boy!"

Dal, glaring, did not reply. The chance encounter with the hulking Arkansan did not better his mood, as he continued his errand through the cabin country—the big compartment under the poopdeck upon which the stateroom doors of the officers' quarters opened.

His rubber heels fell silently on the shellacked linoleum. He had taken several steps in the dimness before he saw, leaning as if asleep on the big paymaster's safe, a squat, wide figure—Ben Whitehead, the Negro laundryman. Ben was unofficial comedian of the *Shenandoah.* He was Jamaica-born and talked in a whining cockney dialect. His arms were like a gorilla's; the skin of his bullet head was so loose that he could lift his eyebrows a couple of inches and flap his ears like a mule.

As able seaman and cook, he had been years in sailing ships; had served in the Navy during the Spanish-American War. He was a chanteyman, a clog-dancer, and a born clown. But for all his monkey antics that amused the crew, "Efficiency Mac" had his eye on Ben. Lazy, dirty, an inveterate liar and gambler, the Negro

was as insolent as he dared to be to petty officers and officers.

Dal's first thought was to ask Ben about the twenty long-overdue dollars Ben owed him. Then he decided to pick a better place for dunning Ben. Enlisted men were not supposed to lend money, nor to come into the cabin country except on business. So Dal went on to the ladder leading down to the wardroom. Here he found the paymaster, a grouchy figure, playing aces-deuces (navy-style backgammon) with the navigator.

"Wait a minute, Hawken!" growled the paymaster. "I've some more papers in my room. Come on up and I'll get 'em for you."

Dal followed him up the ladder to the cabin country. The paymaster was turning into his stateroom when he saw Ben Whitehead. He roared at the Negro, who straightened like a cat and skated backward ten feet, and then looked blankly about.

"Hi'm wytin' for the hexecutive hofficer," Ben said calmly.

"Well, don't make my safe your bed! And move back, while you're at it! You're too fragrant for my taste! Good scrubbing with sand and canvas is what you need."

Suddenly, as he glowered at Ben, the paymaster's sallow face turned white. He rushed forward and snatched at the safe door handle. It turned and he gasped as the door opened. Dal stared wide-eyed. Into the safe that very morning Paymaster Ledoux had put nearly seventy-five thousand dollars! The paymaster jerked out the currency drawer, emptied it on the safe top and began furiously to thumb the sheaves

of bills. His sigh of relief when he found the count correct could be heard the length of the cabin country. He mopped his dripping face with a handkerchief.

"*You opened that safe!*" he cried accusingly, whirling upon Ben.

"*Hi* hopen 'im? Bah Jove! Hi fink Hi see *you* hopen 'im."

"Shut your insolent mouth!" roared the paymaster. "You'll wear gray in 84-Prison for this job. Wait until I find the executive officer!"

Ben stared after the paymaster's vanishing figure; his ears flapped thoughtfully. Then he looked at Dal. Meeting the little apish eyes, Dal suddenly wondered if Ben were just the clown he pretended to be; if he were not really a pretty deep, shrewd customer, who laughed at those who laughed at him.

"Mah word!" said Ben. "'E fink Hi hopen 'im." Like a big ape, he slid forward and turned the door handle—and opened the safe. The paymaster had rushed away without locking it. "'Ow you lock 'is fing?" the Negro asked of Dal, who showed him.

"Better get for'ard, Ben!" he advised. "Stay out of here, from now on. And dig up that twenty bucks of mine, too. I'm tired of your excuses!"

"Hi don't got no money now, 't all. But Hi see habout hit, Yeoman."

They stepped through the watertight door and on the quarterdeck faced "Efficiency Mac" and the excited paymaster. The Exec's sharp blue eyes went to Ben, but he spoke to Dal.

"Hawken," he said curtly, "let's hear what you know of this business."

Dal told what he knew, without saying anything about the paymaster's leaving the safe unlocked. "Efficiency Mac" was studying Ben's blank black face.

"Now, Pay, you didn't by any chance forget to lock it this morning?"

"With seventy-five thousand in it?" cried the paymaster. "Ridiculous! In all my time I've *never* left it unlocked! Absurd!"

Ben's little eyes turned solemnly to Dal; he crossed them in a weird way he had, and worked his eyebrows furiously up and down, flapping his ears as accompaniment. Dal clapped his hand over his mouth to muffle a hysterical giggle.

"Whitehead!" snapped "Efficiency Mac," who had, said the crew, eyes in the back of his head. "Stop that infernal wiggling of your face! Now, Hawken! Why the snickering?"

"He—he—the paymaster left it unlocked just now, when he came out!"

"Absurd!" shouted the paymaster, but suddenly turned red and subsided.

"Well, that's that!" shrugged "Efficiency Mac." "You've alibied him, Pay. If you'd locked it this last time, I'd send him over to the *Philadelphia* for general court-martial. But there's no evidence against him now." He whirled upon Ben.

"But I've had my eye on you for long, Whitehead! *Watch—your—step!* Now, get for'ard! *Siggie nao!*"

The *Shenandoah* was standing down the Strait of Juan de Fuca toward open sea by nightfall. At five minutes of ten the quartermaster on watch waked Dal,

where he slept on a desk in the office. Dal dressed sleepily, stopped at the ship-fitters' bench for coffee, then climbed the ladder to the forecastle and turned aft toward the poopdeck, to stand his watch between the automatic life buoys.

The moon shone fitfully, as the drifting clouds permitted, but its light and the pale rays of the standing-lights on the deckhouses in the well-deck barely broke the darkness. Dal was opposite and above the canteen, or ship's store, when a footfall below made him stop. He looked down. The canteen was a square steel deckhouse with door opening on a two-foot wide space separating it from the next house forward. At first Dal saw nothing, heard nothing more except the swash of water slapping the cruiser's side.

Then a shadow moved. A flash of moonlight showed a short, wide figure in the passageway before the canteen door. It might have been a quartermaster going aft to read the patent log, or an oiler from the evaporator room. But the shape of the dark figure made Dal think instantly of the scene in the cabin country that morning. He leaned over the rail. If that were not Ben Whitehead, with hand on the canteen door padlock——

"Who's that?" he sang out, and was answered by a startled grunt. He swung over and dropped to the well-deck eight feet below. But the prowler had vanished. It was useless to try locating him in the dark well-deck; so Dal came back and tried the padlock. It hung securely on the heavy brass hasp.

"That's funny!" Dal said to himself. But the canteen seemed secure against anything but the sledge-

hammers. So he went aft and took his watch on the poopdeck.

It was ship routine that the canteen should be opened with the bugler's call of mess-gear at 7:20 each morning. Dal was coming sleepily down the well-deck with his bucket of fresh water when Cy Benson, face paper-white, leaped out of the passageway before the canteen door.

"Canteen's been robbed!" he cried to Dal. "Hundred dollars gone from the register and a lot of stuff from the shelves!"

Instantly, Dal thought of the prowler he had seen. But Cy was rushing aft to wake the paymaster. Dal bathed and dressed hurriedly, then joined the curious group standing before the locked canteen.

"Funny robbery!" the men were saying. "Canteen was locked when Cy came up this morning. The two air ports are dogged down from the inside and there's no sign of breaking in on the door. Funny! Maybe Cy's cuckoo—or mighty wise . . ."

Cy and the paymaster, with Kelly, the master-at-arms, came hurrying up. Cy unlocked the canteen and the paymaster began rushing from one point to another.

"But how *could* it be robbed, Benson?" he cried angrily. "Except through the air ports or the door, it can't be entered. Houdini himself——" Then he whirled upon Kelly: "Go get that Negro, Whitehead! Bring him here on the double!"

Most of the men trickled away as the boatswain's mates' pipes shrilled "pipe-down" to breakfast. But this mystery was more interesting to Dal than his ham

and eggs. Kelly came down the deck, leading Ben Whitehead, who was calmly eating sandwiches.

"Whitehead! You robbed the canteen!" cried the paymaster.

Ben gulped down his last sandwich, then stared with crossed eyes at the paymaster's waggling finger.

"Hoh! Hi *did?*" he said politely, flapping his ears.

"You think you're clever!" bellowed the paymaster. "But you'll do time for this. Now, you might as well make a clean breast of it!"

"Hi'm harrested? Hall right, then! Hi don't got nothing to say!"

"Put him in the brig!" snapped the paymaster. "Then search his bag! Search the whole laundry! I'll see the executive officer now."

Dal ate breakfast thoughtfully. While the paymaster's suspicion of Ben had matched his own, there was no shred of evidence against the Negro. Nothing had been found in his clothes bag or in the laundry. Anyway, how could Ben or anyone else get into that steel box without going through the air ports (which were too small to let a child through) or the door? How could he enter through the door and leave no trace of breaking in? The lock was sound and Cy had turned in his key to the paymaster at 5:30 the preceding evening.

Around the mess table there were some who saw this as clearly as Dal and said that perhaps Cy Benson knew more than he had told.

"Well," said a gunner's mate, "even if the Board of Investigation doesn't recommend Cy for a court, for taking the money himself, he'll always be under sus-

picion. *You* should worry, eh, Hawken? Your deadly rival's in a jam and so you win the race by default!"

This was a new angle of the situation. With Cy permanently under suspicion, that single vacancy *was* Dal's, without any effort on his part. But this brought thought of Cy's pale, worried face. That picture made Dal uncomfortable. He tried to tell himself that it was no business of his, one way or the other. But his mind was not eased; the thought of Benson remained.

Near eleven o'clock Dal passed through the for'ard berth-deck compartment on his way to the pay office. The brig, or ship prison, consisted of two small cells on this deck. A seaman with an automatic and billy walked post before them. Ben Whitehead called to Dal, who turned and went rather unwillingly over to the cell.

"Yeoman," said Ben in a sad tone, "Hi fink you lose twenty dollar. *Hi* don't rob 'at canteen, but paymaster, 'e don't stop hun 'til hold Ben wear 'em ball han' chain. S'pose you want twenty dollar, better 'elp Ben!"

"If you didn't rob the canteen, what were you doing at its door at four bells last night?" demanded Dal in a low tone.

Ben rolled his apish eyes amazedly. "Yeoman! *Hi* don't be by 'at canteen door *no* time last night!"

Mechanically, Dal moved back; Ben was too odorous for close quarters. As he moved, a thought came to him.

"I believe you!" he said more to himself than to Ben. "I was within four feet of whoever that was. I would have *smelled* you. But still, even if that were

someone else, you could still have robbed the canteen, later. . . . Guess I'll have to tell the Exec."

As he stepped frowningly through the door into the next compartment, he faced the "jack-o'-the-dust."

"Well, Yeoman, yer twenty's shot!" grinned Bundy maliciously. "They'll sho' hang that niggah!"

"Oh, *I* don't know!" drawled Dal. He had no use for Bundy. "Nothing on him, any more than there's on—say, *you!*"

"Don't ye be sayin' *I* had nothin' to do with it!" snarled Bundy indignantly. "I'll poke yer nose for ye!"

"Arkansas stuff!" sneered Dal, sticking out his chin. "Where *I* come from, they poke *each other!* Now, put up or shut up!"

But Bundy, glaring at him, with hands in the pockets of his dungaree trousers, suddenly turned gray. His hands worked furiously in his pockets. He whirled and shot across the deck to the door of his storeroom. Almost instantly he came rushing out again, snapped the lock on the door, and leaped for the ladder to the well-deck. Then, catching sight of the staring Dal, he slowed his pace, and climbed the ladder with deliberation.

"Well!" breathed Dal. "Is our little friend going cuckoo?"

He tossed his papers onto the desk in the pay office and followed Bundy. The jack-o'-the-dust slouched along the well-deck, swinging his big bunch of keys. Dan had almost forgotten the little run-in. If he told "Efficiency Mac" of the prowler he had seen, Ben would probably be released. Not that there was evi-

dence against the Negro, anyway, but Captain Johnson might discharge him as undesirable, on general principles. Twenty dollars was nearly twenty days' pay for a yeoman third; and Dal didn't like the thought of losing it.

Sight of Bundy's keys made him wonder if, among all the keys to "Navy" locks aboard, there could be one to fit the canteen padlocks. But it was well known that these locks each had a key different from all others. Could someone have made a wax impression of the key slot? Hardly, Del decided, without leaving a *little* of the wax adhering to the lock. There had been none; he had examined the lock carefully. Dal scowled absently at Bundy's short, tremendously broad figure.

Suddenly Bundy darted aside—Dal was close behind him now—behind Number Six gun. Dal heard him give a smothered, triumphant exclamation. Wondering, Dal slipped up and peered around the gun. Bundy was squatting in the waterway, turning over in his big paw a common brass "Navy" padlock. Dal's brain seemed to click. Puzzling over every detail of the robbery, he needed only the sight of the lock to tell him everything. Instantly came thought of Cy. Of that single vacancy for second-class. Pretty hard if he, Dal, clearing up this business, lost himself the advancement sure to be his if the robbery remained a mystery! But immediately came self-contempt. There was such a thing as being a square-shooter.

"Got you, Bundy!" he cried.

For an instant Bundy glared up open-mouthed.

Then with a beast-growl he catapulted himself at the yeoman. Though unskilled, he was enormously strong and outweighed Dal forty pounds. Dal, who regularly worked out with Smiley Miller, one of the best welterweights of the Pacific Fleet, had to fall back before a shower of furious, awkward swings. It was like facing a mad gorilla. Dal backed away blocking, side-stepping, shifting, ducking; whipping in a clean, terrific right or left at every opening. But his blows seemed to have no power to hurt Bundy; and even when those of the jack-o'-the-dust but grazed his arms or body, they bruised.

Bundy's continuous snarling was murderous. Dal began to have a feeling of helplessness coupled with a cold fear that if Bundy laid hands on him it meant crippling, perhaps even death. He ducked in under a haymaker and jerked up alternating uppercuts to Bundy's chin. The jack-o'-the-dust only shook his head. Dal burst free of the clutching arms, set himself and put every ounce of his weight behind a long straight right. His fist smacked Bundy squarely amidships—and Bundy only snarled and rushed him! A big fist grazed Dal's face and the weight of Bundy's forearm sent him, half-senseless, to the deck. As Bundy lurched forward Dal lay waiting, too dazed to avoid him.

Then a slim figure darted past him. Dal saw a sort of dazzling twinkle of darting hands and feet, a whirligig of Bundy and an officer. The hulking jack-o'-the-dust crashed flat on his face. Dal sat up groggily and faced the cool, bright eyes of "Efficiency Mac."

"Bundy go insane? Well, even lunacy doesn't compare with *jiu jitsu,* eh?"

"I—hit him with—everything but the—stool and bucket!" panted Dal. "He—he—had *my* goat. Thanks! No, sir, he's not crazy. He robbed the canteen. When he guessed that I knew, he jumped me. It was like fighting a gorilla and a buzz-saw, in one!"

"*He* robbed the canteen? Sure? *Stay where you are, Bundy!* Wait, Hawken! Here's the investigating committee. Oh, Pay! Hawken thinks he's solved your mystery!"

The paymaster, with the surgeon and two ensigns, the long-faced Cy Benson trailing, came up to stare at the furious spectacle.

"Well, sir," said Dal, "last night, from the fore-and-aft bridge, at exactly four bells, I saw a prowler at the canteen door. Thought it was Whitehead, but not being certain, I said nothing. It dawned on me awhile ago that if it had been the Negro, I *must* have smelled him! Bundy, a few minutes ago, acted as if he'd lost something from his pocket. I saw him, just now, pick up a 'Navy' lock from the waterway. I recalled that when I tried the canteen lock, last night, I felt on it the brass shackle intended to hold a chain. You know: chain fastens to both lock and door; lock hangs by it when not snapped in the hasp.

"Now, on the lock that was on the canteen door this morning, *there was no such shackle!* So I knew how the robbery had been worked."

"Oh, doubtless!" said the Exec dryly. "But *I* don't see, yet." The others shook their heads also, but Bundy glared up at Dal like a trapped snake.

"No, sir? Here's how it was done. At 4:30 yesterday, Benson opened canteen. Hung the open lock in

the hasp staple. Along came Bundy—didn't he, Cy? —at a time when nobody else was there. He had in his hand, open, a lock from one of his storerooms—the one in his pocket, now! He simply took Benson's lock off the staple and hung his own there; put Benson's lock, still open, in his pocket.

"Benson closed canteen at 5:30. Didn't pay special attention to the lock—why should he?—just snapped it. Anyway, all these 'Navy' locks look just alike except that some have a chain shackle and some haven't. Well, at four bells last night Bundy was at the canteen door, but I scared him off. He returned later and unlocked the padlock with his key, robbed the canteen, and—snapped Benson's lock on the door. Somehow, he dropped his own lock afterward—maybe someone scared him as I had a bit earlier."

"A simple scheme and *mighty* clever!" nodded "Efficiency Mac." "But it does beat me how a crook will use brains and energy that, turned to honest things, would bring a hundred times the reward! Well, I'm no preacher. Someone get the master-at-arms.

"Benson! If this hadn't been cleared up, I could never have promoted you, even though no formal charge were laid against you. Hawken, this morning I saw you pass a man who was bathing; he had his eyes shut and was groping for his towel. Why didn't you snatch away his towel, just for a joke? It puzzled me . . ."

"I *thought* of doing it," confessed Dal sheepishly. "But—I've quit skylarking during working hours. Fellow can't be a kid all his life—and get anywhere."

"I—see—yes. I see—several things! Well, you've

cleared Benson by a neat bit of headwork. But didn't you realize that you and Benson'd be neck-and-neck?"

"I'd have been a fine skunk to let him be suspected when I could clear him! Now, wouldn't I?" Dal was red, remembering his thought of that very point.

"We're not neck-and-neck, sir!" Cy Benson said quickly. "If I had a second-class crow, I'd hand it to Hawken in a minute! Fine dumb-bell I am—not knowing my own lock, when *I* pulled the shackle off of it!"

"All right. Take your examination this afternoon, Hawken. Ah, here's the master-at-arms. Kelly! Take this fallen Raffles to the brig. Let out the Missing Link. And, Kelly! Tell Bowman to furnish about eight of his merry men for the sand-and-canvas detail. Turn Whitehead over to them and say that I wish him to gleam even as a statue of polished ebony when they finish. When he's presentable, send him aft; he'll wish to draw special money in the sum of twenty dollars. He owes a debt and wishes to pay it."

For a moment "Efficiency Mac's" bright blue eyes wandered toward Dal. A queer bird, the Exec. The crew claimed he had eyes in the back of his head.

SQUIFFY

BY CAPTAIN DINGLE

A FAT, red-faced skipper, and his buxom, red-cheeked wife looked along the wharf from the poop of the bark *Westward*. Anger puffed out both pairs of red cheeks, for not fifty yards away a skinny, ragged lad of fifteen or so squirmed in the hands of a hulking man who started to ply a piece of board with lusty strokes upon the lad's head and shoulders.

"He'll kill him! Go stop him, John!" panted the old lady.

Cap'n John left the rail, started to waddle toward the gangway, and stopped abruptly at the sudden tug of his wife's strong hand at his coat tail.

"No, don't you go nigh 'em! Don't you dare, John Rogers! Such language from a boy! Just listen. My gracious!" the old lady screamed.

Even at fifty yards the whacks of the board could be heard. But clearer yet was the lad's shrill treble, and the language he was using to his assailant was, well, it was hot, shuddery.

"If I had him aboard o' us for a v'yage," mused old Cap'n John, shaking his tousled white head.

"You won't do no such thing!" stated his wife, as she bounced below, puffing with indignation.

Cap'n John Rogers was a comfortable sort of a

man. He sailed a comfortable old ship in the Brazil trade; his old wife was comfortable, and between them they ran their floating home in a comfortable way. Their crew stayed with them year after year, the ship made money, and about the only heart burning either ever felt was the regret that they had no children to brighten these later years. Even that cause had vanished in a measure. One voyage ago they had taken into their little circle a niece, who filled a part of the aching void; but, as Cap'n John grumbled, "gals ain't boys." There was a trace of wistfulness in the skipper's face as he gazed along the dock.

The man stopped beating the lad, and turned away, telling him he'd catch it again if he didn't watch out. The lad answered with more profanity. Out from a pile of barrels crept a tattered-eared dog, crawling on his belly toward the boy. The man saw and took a running kick at the cur that sent it yelping yards away. The next instant the boy leaped on the man's shoulders from behind, and tore furiously with his finger nails at face and neck.

Fierce as was the attack, and unexpected, the man's strength was too much for the boy. The mongrel dog flew to the fight, yapping bravely, only to receive another savage kick. And the boy was flung off. The man turned grimly upon the cowering urchin.

Cap'n John gurgled a throaty warning and waddled down the gangway with a determined air. Seeing him, the man half paused in his attack, scowling first, then grinning as the fat old man advanced.

Then at the other end of the wharf appeared a policeman. The man let go, dodging behind some

empties. Like a greased eel the boy vanished into some devious cranny, his dog at his heels, and the wharf became as silent as a grave. Only a puffing ship master at one end and a scowling, mystified policeman at the other broke the stretch of plank. The officer started to approach Cap'n John. Suddenly the man broke away from hiding and darted into the street. The policeman put out after him, and Cap'n John slowly returned to his ship, laboring for breath, determined never again to bother with other people's troubles.

He stood at the rail, cooling off, listening to the welcome rattle of crockery in the cabin below. At the galley door the cook, "Doctor" to the crew, called to a sailor to help him carry a barrel of garbage to the dockside. That was always a sign that supper would be ready soon. The "Doctor" always disposed of his garbage in port just before cleaning himself up in preparation for serving the cabin meal.

Cap'n John heaved a sigh of pleasant anticipation. His nose had caught the faint aroma of fried onions. His ears were attuned to catch the first tinkle of the supper bell. Instead, they caught the bump of an overturned garbage barrel, the yelp of a dog, the chuckle of a boy. Cap'n John turned slowly to look. Then he backed from the rail to the shelter of the deckhouse companionway, and watched with a humorous, kindly glint in his eyes.

From the overturned refuse the dog snatched a bone and the boy dived for a piece of piecrust; then together they darted back to their mysterious retreat among the empties. The garbage lay scattered in an unlovely mess by the ship.

"I'll tell Sally about it," Cap'n John wheezed. Then the bell rang and drove from his head every thought but that of fried steak and onions.

After supper Cap'n John smoked a good-night pipe on deck. One by one the crew walked ashore. Both mates went, although the ship was sailing on the early morning tide. Cap'n John felt too comfortable to want to go away from his ship; but he was too good an old fellow to forbid others a bit of shore jollification, particularly since all his men were of proved loyalty.

Perhaps there might have been another reason for his fat serenity; something which justified the twinkle in his keen old eyes.

Once he stole down the gangway, tiptoed across the wharf, and listened intently beside the empties. At first the stillness was alarming. Then came the thump, thump, thump of dog industry opposed to nimble fleas, and Cap'n John retired to his post of observation smiling happily.

He had tried, at supper time, to broach the subject of the waif to Sally. Their niece, Mary, sparkled with interest, but Sally had snorted, almost choked upon a piece of steak, and with tears running down her fat cheeks warned him of awful happenings if he mentioned that boy again.

Cap'n John knew, however, how motherly her old heart really was. So he continued to smile happily as he waited until the cabin lay dim and silent. Then he waddled along to the galley, laboriously made a huge cold steak sandwich, selected another piece of meat with more gristle and a bit of bone, and waddled ashore again. He crept to the pile of empties, listened

for a moment, and peeped over a corner packing case.

The barest glimmer from a remote arc lamp touched two shaggy heads. The boy lay with his head on his dog's body, and both were sleeping peacefully.

Cap'n John tossed the gristly bit of steak in front of the dog's muzzle and drew back hastily. The sleepers stirred. There was the snap of jaws, and the thud of a paw clamping down on the treasure.

Then: "Hey! C'm off! Gimmie th' grub 'til I divide it fair. Share an' share alike, Rags."

Cap'n John wagged a fat hand over the case, the thick sandwich looking like a brick in the half light. "Boy!" he huskily whispered.

The boy started up, frightened. Rags growled, teeth bared.

"Hush, boy, I'm not going to hurt you."

"Betcher fat head you ain't," was the retort. The boy swiftly squirmed his skinny body between two barrels and peered out, ratlike. "Whatcher want? I ain't done nothing."

"Here, I've brought you a sandwich," whispered the skipper cajolingly. "It was me threw that meat to the dog. Let him have it, sonny. This is a better bit. Here. Take it."

"Huh! What's th' matter wit' it?" But the lad advanced cautiously and snatched the food. He took a bite, suspiciously, then gave back the gristly meat to the dog. "Whatcher want o' me, Mister? None o' yer funny business. Whatcher want?"

"I've got a cosier place for you to sleep than this."

The boy munched on steadily, warily. The offer of a bed failed to arouse his interest.

"I saw a policeman awhile back," went on Cap'n John. The boy merely glanced sharply at him. Then Cap'n John played a trump card. "You can bring your dog, too," he said.

"Where? Orph'nage?"

"No. On that ship."

"Aw, chee! It couldn't be no orph'nage, neither, Rags, else he wouldn't said you could come." The lad stopped to fondle the cur's ragged head. He seemed to forget the skipper altogether.

Cap'n John grew anxious. "There's a parrot," he said. "And good food, and——"

"Where's th' parrot? Yer lyin'."

"Come with me. I'll show you. There's a dandy big barrel Rags can have for a dog house. You can——"

"Show us th' parrot, Mister. C'm on. Hey, you leave me loose. I ain't no sucker. I'll follow youse, but you can't drag me."

Cap'n John waddled up the gangway, his thoughts divided between his triumph and the resolve to teach the urchin that it was a painful business to call an elderly ship master a liar to his face. For the moment elation won. There was a tiny corner in the sail room where in the palmier days of the old *Westward* a sailmaker had slept. Beside a heap of spare sails stood a barrel half full of rope ends and scraps of canvas: "shakings" in sea lingo. The skipper overturned it, partly leveled the shakings with his foot, and stepped outside.

"There you are, sonny. That's a fine bed for a dog. That snug little bunk is for you. I'll tell the cook to

give you some breakfast. Then you beat it ashore, see, before my missus catches you. Understand?"

"Sure," grinned the youth. "Them dames is fierce." He winked at Cap'n John, and started to push Rags into the barrel. "None o' yer games, Mister. If youse shut me in here, I'll raise th' old scratch an' wake yer missus up, see? I'll git out in time. An' t'anks fer the flop."

As Cap'n John sneaked along to give the Doctor his orders, a warm glow crept over him. He had warmed first to the homeless waif because of his treatment of the dog. But it was not the dog incident alone which caused that glow to warm old Cap'n John.

"The kid said 'Thankee for the bed!' " he chuckled. "I knowed there was good in him somewheres, by cracky! I'll tell Sally."

Then he shook the grumbling cook into wakefulness and whispered into his ear.

"D'year, Doctor? Soon's the men get their coffee, and get to workin' the ship out, you have some hash and a mug o' coffee all ready. Keep yer eye on that lad, and if he stirs, you start in to feed him, and feed him good. If you let him or that dog get out afore the tug leaves us, I'll keelhaul you, by cracky!"

Courage failed, however, in the chill gray of dawn when old Sally took her established place beside the wheel. It was a declining day for sailing ships. Cap'n John had to cut down on his crew. So Sally, loyal old spouse, never missed taking the helm on leaving or entering port, so that every man might be available for real work. It was a very chill dawn, and old Sally

wore such a grim expression that Cap'n John shut his mouth sharply while yet the first word of his story hung on his tongue.

The capstan began to clank as the cable was hove in. Men stamped sturdily around, heaving on the handspikes, bawling in notes as rough as the work:

"Oh, Sally Brown's a bright mulatto;
Way-hay, roll and go!
Ha, she drinks rum and chews tobacker;
Spent my money on Sally Brown!"

Cap'n John paced the poop nervously. He had overlooked the racket of heaving in the stream anchor when laying his little plot. He glanced at the sail-room door. That old chanty would waken the Seven Sleepers.

"Seven long years I courted Sally,
Way-hay, roll and go!
She used to live in Shin Bone Alley;
Spent my money on Sally Brown!"

A dog's head was poked out of the sail-room door and a lusty bark saluted the morning. As if shot out of a gun, the Doctor emerged from the galley, casting a scared look aft. In one hand he gripped clumsily a tin plate of hash and a tin pannikin of coffee. In the other hand he swung a big cage containing an irate parrot.

The Doctor slammed the cage down on the hatch beside the galley and darted into the sail room to feed the skipper's guest and keep him safely off the deck. The dog dodged between his legs and stood outside, barking joyfully. The parrot saw him and cursed him roundly. The next moment the cage was knocked over

and the door flew wide. Then a frightened mongrel pup was speeding around the decks ridden by a screaming, clawing feathered fiend that swore like a longshoreman.

"Oh, Sally Brown I long to see you," went the chanty. But it stopped suddenly. A man had seen the racing dog and roared the news to his mates. They left the capstan, yelping like schoolboys. The mates tried in vain to bring them to their work.

"By cracky! That's spoiled it!" groaned Cap'n John, and stole a glance aft. Sally's red face was turned full upon him, her eyes awful. He turned hastily from her and looked toward the sail room. There he saw a surprising thing, something which gave him courage.

The lad stood outside the sail room, twisting under the restraining arm of the frantic Doctor, his mouth full of hash, a slopping pannikin of coffee in his hand. And he was laughing until he almost choked at the sight of Rags and his vociferous rider. He laughed, and took no heed to the receding wharf.

"Go to it, Rags! Step on it!" he spluttered.

"John Rogers! You took that horrid boy aboard!" gasped Sally. "Arter what I said, too, about——"

"Missus, you keep quiet ontil we get to sea. You know that's a rule. Don't you dare jaw me. I warn you!" returned Cap'n John authoritatively.

Sally obeyed the one unalterable law of the ship. She clamped her lips shut. But her bright eyes held a gleam that Cap'n John preferred not to meet just then. He bellowed at the mates. They bawled at the men; and while the Doctor chased the dog to rescue

his beloved parrot the capstan pawls began clanking again.

The anchor came up, the ship was clear of the quay, and the tug went slowly ahead, edging the deep-laden ship toward the outer channel. Men clambered aloft and let fall topsails and topgallants, while others, led in two gangs by the two mates, stood ready to sheet home and hoist.

Old Sally steered expertly after the tug; but the glint in her eye had lost none of its hardness. Cap'n John glanced furtively around the decks. No dog, no boy. In the galley the parrot screamed protest against being caged after his brief but brilliant moment of freedom. But no boy, no dog appeared.

Sadly the skipper concluded that his protégé must have slipped overboard and escaped. He sighed heavily. He had wanted badly to try his hand on a bit of material like that, to dig out the man that must lie under the boy's grime. Now the lad was gone. And he had yet to face old Sally. Oh, well!

"Get a move on with them tawps'ls!" he roared.

The heavy topsail yard jerked aloft; the canvas billowed out on the fresh morning breeze. Cap'n John suddenly stopped in his pacing, listening eagerly, for he thought he caught, above the uproar of rusty voices and windy sails, the abruptly muffled howl of a dog. But he resumed his nervous walk, back and forth between the wheel and the poop rail, disappointed.

"Yow-ow-ow-owr-oo-oo-owrh!" Cap'n John swung around like a flash, his mouth open wide, heedless of Sally's sharp exclamation.

"Yow-ow-ow-owr-oo-oo-owrh!" blared forth again,

and Rags appeared, feet apart, nose pointed skyward, on top of the forward house between the spare spars. And crawling after him, looking scared, the boy.

"John Rogers! Set them critters onto that tug at once!" cried Sally, casting rules to the four winds.

Cap'n John feigned a superb deafness. Glancing forward, he saw the inner jib rising up the stay. The mates were giving a last pull to the topsail braces. Men stood beside the tug towline ready to let go. The tug tooted a question on her whistle.

"Cast off!" roared Cap'n John. And without looking aft, he ordered the helmswoman: "Port a bit! Port! Stiddy!"

The ship was away, bound for Brazil, left to her own devices; and try as he might, Cap'n John Rogers could not any longer seem deaf to that insistent voice from the wheel. Sally's trick of steering was up as soon as the tug let go.

"Send Jenks to the wheel, Mr. Bolt," Cap'n John shouted resignedly.

Jenks came at the double. He had heard Sally's shrill tones and knew trouble was in the wind.

Cap'n John shrugged uneasily as the man passed him, dreading the moment when he must face the music. Sight of the dog, leaping joyously upon the boy, inspired him.

"Boy! Come here! Sharp's the word!" he roared. He heard Sally wheezing behind him, struggling to utter the first word of the torrent due.

"Come along, now. I'm not going to hurt you!" the skipper went on.

"Yes! C'm here, you boy!" shrilled Sally.

Grinning in spite of fears, loyal to the bestower of food and bed, the lad trotted aft and faced the angry woman bravely. Rags, perhaps not less bravely, but less reckless and less conscientious about loyalty to a stranger, crept warily after.

"Aw, Sally, don't be hard," began Cap'n John.

"Shut up!" snapped Sally, and switched to the boy. "How come you here? Speak the truth now! Didn't he——" She jabbed a fat forefinger at the skipper as she quizzed the boy. The grin crept back into the lad's dirty face. His eyes twinkled; and Sally saw they were dark brown eyes. She remembered that afterward when her anger was gone.

"Him? That fat ol' wampus?" the urchin retorted.

Cap'n John gasped unbelievingly at the boy's impudence. Gasped again as he caught a brazen wink.

Old Sally gasped with shock. Then some of the glitter in her eyes softened.

"He chased me last night, he did," went on the young inventor. "I sneaked up the ladder to mooch some grub for me dawg, an' that feller wit' the parrot kept me in a room, an'——"

Sally's smile was struggling out. The youngster's dirty face held something which pulled at her motherly old heart. But she saw Cap'n John's pleased expression and glared at the boy.

"Well?"

But the lad was staring beyond her. "Chee!" he gasped. "Chee!"

Sally swung around, following his gaze. Cap'n John laughed aloud. Jenks let the ship swing a point and a quarter off her course while he laughed, too.

Framed in the companionway door, black hair flying in the breeze, cheeks rosy, and eyes dancing with mischief, Mary stood. She was staring straight at the ragged youngster. He stared straight at her, as he might have stared at a wonderful picture. Rags whined, glanced up at his master, got no attention, trotted up to the girl, and thrust his cold nose into her hand.

"Goodness! What a dirty boy!" rippled Mary.

"Wuff!" agreed Rags, and the boy grumbled confusedly.

Cap'n John seized the favorable moment. "Come along o' me, my lad. I'll clean you up," he said grimly. There were moments when he forgot the unmistakable wink he had detected, and only remembered the words, "fat wampus."

But the boy obeyed docilely, never looking backward, nor worrying about the welfare of Rags now; and as they descended the poop ladder he again winked up at Cap'n John, and whispered hoarsely:

"I didn't mean you wuz a fat wampus, Mister. But youse is wise to these dames. I give her a wink, too. That guy you told to wake me up so's I could git ashore in time never done it, Mister, honest he didn't. He brung me grub after them guys started yellin' them songs. Chee! Some singin'! Then I see Rags doin' five furlongs in nothin' flat, wit' that red, white, an' blue rooster cussin' on his back, and I wanted to stay. So I hid."

Cap'n John marched right ahead toward the galley, his face noncommittal.

The lad looked a bit frightened. "Chee, Mister;

youse ain't mad at me? I didn't mean to tell no lie. I said youse chased me, and that th' cook shut me in so's youse wouldn't git in Dutch wit' yer old woman."

Cap'n John held a set face, but his keen old eyes glistened more than kindly.

"Hey, Doctor," he said at the galley door. "Get some warm water and soft soap and clean this boy up so's we can see what color he was born. Send him aft 'soon's he's dry."

"Chee! Kin I stay?" cried the boy, already naked to the waist. "Kin I, Mister? If I clean?"

"I'll see. You shut your mouth, unless you like soap."

Cap'n John returned along the main deck, half scared to meet Sally. Mary was racing Rags up and down the poop, around the wheel, over skylights. Old Sally, lurking within the companionway, watched her uneasy spouse until he turned to come aft; then she waddled down to the cabin, chuckling fatly:

"Fat ol' wampus! My gracious! Never noticed it before, that I didn't! You are fat, John Rogers, bless me if you ain't!"

A week worked wonders. By that time the *Westward* had buffeted her way through the stormy Gulf Stream, and the ship's company were divided into two camps, on the boy's account. Cap'n John had tried, that first day at sea, to coax the urchin's history from him, with small success. The boy said his name was Squiffy.

"I never been called nothin' but that, I tell yer," he insisted impatiently. "No, I never had no home, nor no mother as I knows of. But I had a father. You see him lickin' th' stuffin' outa me on th' dock, dintcha?"

"What did they call him?" the skipper persevered.

"Who? Th' cops called him a dirty ol' bum. I called him——"

"Never mind," said Cap'n John hastily. "We'll call you Squiffy until we can find a better name for you. That'll depend on how you behave. Understand?"

"Aw, chee! Youse make me sick wit' yer behave!" retorted Squiffy. "You wit' 'behave!' Th' flapper wit' 'Youse mustn't say this, youse mustn't say that!' and th' old woman always pokin' me around, lookin' to see have I washed behind me ears! If 'twuzn't fer Rags I'd tell youse all good-bye."

But neither Rags, growing livelier and fatter daily, nor Squiffy appeared to dislike the life as much as the boy implied. The skipper had made Squiffy cabin boy, to assist the Doctor with his duties aft. That lasted, with fair satisfaction to all concerned, until old Sally hauled Squiffy over her lap one day on the poop and sewed a patch on his homemade trousers right in front of the helmsman and Mary. The lad might have endured the snickering of the helmsman. He could return that with generous interest when out of hearing of the old lady. But the merry laughter of the girl he could not stand.

So without any regard for orders, Squiffy left the cabin and took up his quarters in the forecastle. He ignored the protests of the men, who pointed out to him that there was no spare bunk. He dragged Rags forward with difficulty, for the dog knew where his ribs got fattened, and used him for a pillow as in the old days. To all attempts to dislodge him the boy showed tooth and nail; and if the growl of loyal yet

wavering Rags was a trifle unenthusiastic, it was a growl just the same.

"Leave him be," Cap'n John replied to old Sally's twentieth demand that he do something to rescue the lad from the evil influences of the forecastle. "This weather'll soon bring him out." The ship was plunging heavily, hauled sharp on the wind in a steep sea. "He won't feel so good presently. 'Sides, old girl, don't you go for to run down my sailors. They been with us a long time, and you never see nothin' bad about 'em afore. Leave 'em be."

"Huh! They never had a innocent boy to teach their wickedness to afore. If you don't get him out tomorrow, I'm goin' to," old Sally snapped, and bounced below.

The men of the forecastle soon tired of their guest. He was very seasick for a whole day. He refused to stir, and Rags abetted him. When he recovered, the men naturally looked to him to earn at least his food. Since the skipper and mates left him alone, and even old Sally refrained from going into the forecastle in person to drag him forth, the sailors elected the boy permanent Peggy; that meant that he should keep the place clean, carry the food from the galley, and clear away the remnants after each meal. But Squiffy had other ideas.

"If I gotta work, I'll work where th' folks is clean," he said impudently. That got him a walloping from Jenks, who shaved every Sunday if the weather was good.

Squiffy haughtily returned to the cabin and demanded his job back. Cap'n John and old Sally, for

once in complete accord, studiously ignored him. So did Mary. Finally he slunk forward once more, feeling bitter against everybody. He was an outcast.

Now the men treated him to the silent cure. None spoke to him. They also decreed that he who would not work should not eat. Squiffy revealed unexpected traces of pride then. He refused either to beg or climb down. But Rags had developed a terrific appetite. If the dog was to be kept away from the cabin, he must be fed.

That evening, when the sooty clouds hid the stars, the great rolling seas hurling stinging sprays across the decks, keeping under cover all hands not actually on duty at wheel or lookout, Squiffy sneaked into the sail room with Rags. He had to watch his chance, for the galley was right abreast the door. He saw the Doctor put on his jacket. That meant that the cabin supper was about to be served. When the Doctor began dishing up, Squiffy saw a huge plateful of the very choicest of the different dishes set aside for the Doctor's own late supper. The smell was maddening, for the wind blew the fragrant steam straight to Squiffy's nose. The boy had to clamp a hand upon Rags' muzzle to stifle a betraying howl.

The Doctor started aft, laden with covered dishes, and the boy moved swiftly. In one minute he had seized a dish cloth and clapped it over the two plates containing the Doctor's supper; in another he was back in the sail room removing the gag from Rags.

"Hush yer row, can't yer?" he hissed. "Shut up, I tell yer! D'ye wanta bring them thick sailors! Here! Catch this, y' hungry mutt." He gave the dog a juicy

chicken leg. And in the darkness the two fell to eating ravenously.

The Doctor returned to the galley for the coffee pot, and Squiffy knew he would be busy aft for half an hour. Stealthily he crept out, followed by the contented dog, and crawled into a quiet corner in the ship's bows, to sleep.

There was an uproar, but Squiffy ignored it. Honest men indignantly denied the theft. The mates told the Doctor to tell his troubles to the parrot. The skipper ordered them to bring the boy to him; and a young able seaman, the only new hand, spoke up:

" 'Twasn't him, sir. I know it wasn't. The lad's been sleepin' on deck beside my bunk all the watch."

"Very well, lads, you can go for'ard," said the skipper. "Doctor, you better rustle some more supper for yourself."

In the forecastle, Green, the seaman who had defended Squiffy, sat on the edge of his bunk whittling a pipeful of tobacco. His watch mates had tumbled into their bunks, growling at having their rest broken, and were already snoring. Green keenly scrutinized the sleeping lad.

"Squiffy!" he whispered, packing cut plug into his pipe.

"Squiffy!" he whispered again. He lit his pipe and puffed gusts of strong smoke down at the lad's face. Rags sneezed, brushing a paw across his nose and scratching his master's face. Squiffy's slumbers seemed proof against anything.

"Squiffy! I saved you a lickin'. Th' Old Man was goin' to trice you up an' give you nine dozen wi' a cat-

o'-nine-tails, he was, Squiffy! Hey, wake up! You ain't sleepin'. If you don't care, I can tell th' skipper I was mistook. I told him you was sleepin' 'longside o' me all th' watch." Squiffy lay motionless. "All right then. Stealin' grub's a hangin' matter in some ships. I don't know 'bout this yer Old Man, but——"

Squiffy shuddered, rubbing his eyes, and shoved Rags aside.

"I been asleep," he muttered. "Was youse speakin' to me?"

"Oh no! I only been countin' sheepses to get to sleep!" retorted Green. "Listen!"

Green whispered into Squiffy's ear. "I won't do it!" said Squiffy vehemently. "D'youse think I'm a thief?"

"How about swipin' th' Doctor's supper?" jeered Green.

"I had to feed my dawg, didn't I?"

"Listen. Here, have a coupla whuffs." Green proffered glowing pipe.

Squiffy's eyes glistened. He took the pipe and inhaled great draughts of smoke. It made him cough desperately.

Green didn't laugh at him. He went on whispering as if Squiffy were smoking like a full seasoned sailor man.

"You see how we get fed," he said. "Did th' Doctor eat dry hash? He did not. He had chicken an' puddin' an'—I mean he would have had them things if you hadn't——" The cunning seaman hesitated.

Squiffy shivered, passed back the pipe, and said: "I can't get you no licker! There ain't any in this ship."

"Licker?" echoed Green. "Who said anything about

that? Just a bit o' decent grub, Squiffy, like that what the Doctor 'ud have had if you hadn't——"

Squiffy snatched a bit of line from a heap of gear near the bowsprit heel, and tied Rags to the spar. Without a word, except to warn Rags to lie still, he slipped from the forecastle and disappeared in the blackness of the main deck.

Like one of the shadows he flickered from forecastle to foremast, on to the galley house, to the main fiferail, and paused.

The galley lay dark and quiet. The main-deck cabin doors were closed but not battened. The weather was moderating. During the day big seas had thundered aboard; then the doors were fastened tight. Now only sprays shot across the rail occasionally. No danger in them.

One spray sped out of the windward sea as Squiffy started again. It drenched him. He stopped, sucking in his breath sharply. Then he ran aft, crouching low, chattering his opinion of young Green.

There was no trouble at the door. Squiffy knew the cabin well. He crept inside. Right before him loomed something which chilled his blood. He halted where he stood, one foot still raised. Hanging from a beam was the Doctor's parrot cage. Breathless, Squiffy waited for the squawk that must betray him. Then he realized that the cage was empty, and concluded that since Rags had been taken away, Mary had begged the parrot to take the dog's place.

"Chee!" muttered Squiffy. "Chee! I hope that bird don't use langwidge like he used t' ol' Rags!"

Queerly, the decent thought worked a subtle change

in the boy. He had crept along toward the grating hatch of the lazaret, where the finer cabin stores were kept. On the end of the saloon table the skipper's mellow pipe lay in a tray, just as Cap'n John had left it, after knocking out the ashes of his good-night smoke. Near it, Squiffy halted again, thinking furiously. He was going to steal from folks who had been good to him. And for somebody else.

"Chee! I ain't goin' ter!" he told himself angrily. Then Green's evil half-threat recurred to him. Squiffy was in a bad quandary. It required thought. The old pipe suggested a way to clear thinking, or he thought it did. He stealthily picked it up. It was empty. Right beside him the door of the mate's cabin stood open on the hook. Under the turned-down lamp Squiffy knew there was a plug of tobacco and a knife. Mr. Bolt always kept it there so that a surreptitious smoke during the watch could be secured with the smallest loss of time.

In a moment Squiffy had tobacco, knife, pipe, and matches. He stole toward the little pantry, for that lay farthest from the sleeping cabins. He cut his plug, filled his pipe, and puffed luxuriously. Thoughts did not come at first. He was far too comfortable. Then somebody moved, spoke in one of the cabins; and swift as light Squiffy squeezed through the small hatch which opened upon the after hold.

The *Westward* carried coal as the bulk of her cargo. But aft she had a consignment of case cargo, separated from the coal by a rough bulkhead of boards. Squiffy remembered seeing those boards through the booby hatch over the after hold, just forward of the

poop. If he could reach that point, he could squeeze through and out. He thrust his painful way between cases and beams, the skipper's cherished old pipe gripped fiercely between his teeth.

But after conquering barriers at the cost of knee and elbow skin, Squiffy found the hatch closed fast. And now he was in a darkness so intense that he had no idea which way the cabin lay from him. He puffed at his pipe until it glowed fiercely. Instinct told him that somewhere in the direction the smoke drifted an opening must be. Then he remembered hearing about the necessity for good ventilation with a coal cargo. There was a big, man-sized ventilator just abreast of the mainmast. He followed his own smoke and found the outlet to freedom. Then he suddenly remembered his errand.

Eight bells clanged as he stuck his head out of the ventilator cowl. The men came along running, eager to answer the call-over and find shelter. Squiffy ducked out of sight, for young Green trotted past muttering under his breath.

"Chee! I ain't goin' to do it!" vowed Squiffy stoutly. Strong in his sudden virtue he sneaked forward when the ship was once more in silence, unfastened Rags, and slept the sleep of innocence. Not even the hard bulge of the skipper's pipe, or the mate's knife and tobacco plug, could spoil his rest.

At four in the morning Green awoke Squiffy. "Come out with the grub you got for me. I could bite a link outa the best bower cable."

Then Squiffy told his painful tale.

"What?" snarled Green, and seized the shivering lad fiercely. "Listen, me son! If I eats fo'c'sle grub for breakfast, you'll go—— Ho! What's this?" In squirming, Squiffy had spilled the skipper's pipe from his pocket. It was as familiar to all hands aboard the *Westward* as the capstan. Green picked it up, grinning evilly. "Just about breakfast time there'll be a holler about this pipe, Squiffy. I'll hold on to it until we see what I gets for breakfast. Savvee?"

Squiffy "savvied." He tied Rags again, cuffing the dog into astonished submission in his white-faced fury.

"I'll get stores, and I hope youse choke!" he told Green. "But youse don't get nuthin' at all if you keep that pipe, see?"

He sped to the ventilator this time, for the dawn was making the ship less kindly in her sheltering shadows. In half an hour or so the Doctor would be up, making his fire for the morning coffee. The inexorable Green loomed darkly in Squiffy's thoughts.

"Chee! I hope he eats a bad can o' somethin' and its poisoned!" the boy muttered. Enough pale light entered the ventilator now to guide him, and he found the pantry easily. He thrust tins of condensed milk, salmon, marmalade and corned beef hash inside his shirt, and fled to the darker refuge of the hold with chattering teeth.

Once beyond the bulkhead he stopped for breath. Creeping over the dusty, sliding coal, out of reach of the shaft of light from the ventilator, he came upon a barrier of rough planks built around a big sea cock to keep it free of access. Coal sometimes gets on fire; the builders of the *Westward* saw to it that if ever she

caught fire there would be means of speedily flooding the holds. The old ship's pumps were of enormous capacity, too, to take care of such an emergency.

Squiffy knew nothing of such deep intricacies of the sea business.

He found what he sought, a rest for his back, and settled himself there to think. Already he had determined to take the stolen stores back and confess about the Doctor's stolen supper. That seemed easy. He might be punished, but he was used to punishment. And he did not believe that Cap'n John would punish very severely a theft of food.

Ah, but there was young Green. Young Green holding that master trump, the skipper's rich old pipe. When the skipper discovered his loss—that particular loss—Squiffy shuddered to think of it. It would surely be a terrific moment. And the mate's tobacco plug, and his knife. Mr. Bolt had small patience with boys at any time. He had never troubled to hide from the skipper his opinion regarding Squiffy's idle place in the ship. If he once suspected that Squiffy—— That, too, was unthinkable.

"Aw, chee!" groaned Squiffy in mental torment. "Whyn't I stay wit' ol' Sally an' the flapper? I'm in a heckuva hole for fair!"

He heard men trampling overhead; heard their lusty singing as they set the royals and flying jib. He grew nervous to the point of panic. He still had to get out of the hold and steal forward unseen. If young Green had any sense, he'd be handy to cover Squiffy's retreat. But Green was not the sort of accomplice to run risks. Unseeing, unknowing, the boy played with

the big wheel of the sea cock. It turned in his hands. In his idle handling he turned it shut again. But while his mind whistled with his problem, his hands played on. He wept once, frenziedly, rebelliously; but the problem after all remained the same. Green held all the trumps, and Squiffy must play out his poor hand, knowing he could only lose.

"Chee! Wait'll I get a bit bigger! What I'll do to youse!" he muttered savagely to the absent Green as he crawled to the ventilator.

Stealthily he peeped out. The cowl of the ventilator was turned toward the bulwarks. He caught glimpses of men coiling up the gear ready for washing decks. He saw the officer of the watch turn and pace aft. When the last seaman turned his back to get his deck scrubber, Squiffy darted from his cover and vanished into the forecastle like a rat down a hole. Green lay awake in his bunk. Rags was gone.

"Watcher got?" the seaman demanded.

"Where's Rags?" Squiffy countered.

"Aft, I guess. He made a racket, and when I told him to quit he showed his teeth at me an' growled. He burst loose and beat it on deck awhile ago. Watcher got?"

"Gimme th' pipe!"

"No games, my son! Produce!"

Squiffy dumped his spoils on Green's blanket.

"Gimme th' pipe now, else I'll fetch the Old Man to search yer bunk!" he snarled.

Once more in possession of the treasure, the boy left Green enjoying his sly feast and went to the forecastle scuttle. He whistled for Rags, but got no re-

sponse. He decided to delay going after the dog until after breakfast at least. Men were always better tempered after breakfast, he knew. Stronger, too. He needed strength in himself as earnestly as he hoped for good temper in the skipper and the mate.

He curled up, without a pillow, and slept.

It seemed no time until a rough hand was shaking him and a rough voice bawled through the forecastle:

"All hands! Shake a leg! There's a pumpin' job on. Spell the watch at the pumps! Hey, you boy! You, too. All hands. Pump or perish!"

It was the second mate, and young Green hastily shoved an open can of salmon among his blankets as he leaped out to the call. The watch rolled out grumbling.

Squiffy stood shivering on the wet deck, bewildered by the noise. Cap'n John stood on the poop, old Sally beside him, Mary clinging to her hand. The carpenter was at the well, while the watch hove up and down on the big pump brakes, sending the water gushing from the lip into the lee waterways as they chanted:

"Oh, Shenandoah, I long to hear you,
Away, you rolling river!
Across that wide and rolling river,
Ho-ho we're bound away,
'Cross the wide Missouri!"

The newly awakened watch relieved the other men, and the pumping and singing went on briskly. The carpenter called out that the water was decreasing, and Cap'n John answered by bluntly telling the hard-

working carpenter he must have left a hatch off during the breeze and thus let the water in. A wordy combat started; the skipper started to waddle forward.

Squiffy, ill at ease, feeling useless and out of place, saw a chance and took it. In a brace of short breaths he was down his ventilator and at the board bulkhead. He only sought seclusion. But he had seen every occupant of the cabin out on deck, and Rags was not there. The dog was not in the galley, for that was wide open. Squiffy stole to the aperture leading to the pantry, and gave a low whistle.

There came a snappy little bark, and Rags leaped through and fell upon his master. Squiffy pulled the rough ears and whacked the rough head, knocking a huge beef bone out of the dog's mouth. Rags tried to find it. The bone had fallen down between some cases. It was lost. The dog would have returned whence he came, for a bone was a bone, and he knew where there were more.

"Aw, chee! Come on wit' me! I wantcha!" whispered Squiffy, and dragged his recreant pet after him over the coal to the planking around the sea cock. "Now youse set still, Rags. Youse is my dog, not nobody else's. Set still."

Rags sat with head on one side while Squiffy made himself comfortable against the boards and pulled out pipe and plug. He was about to light a match when Mary's voice sounded through the hold:

"Rags! Here, Rags! Bones, Rags!"

Squiffy let the match go and grabbed for the dog;

but Rags had heard that voice, and Squiffy was not half quick enough to touch a hair of him before he was over the bulkhead and in the cabin pantry.

Almost at the breaking point, the boy slumped sullenly against the boards. He fumbled for another match, and scratched it on the box savagely. It broke off. Before he could get another out, a shaft of brilliant light flooded down upon the coal from a lifted hatch, and Cap'n John and the mate and carpenter all clambered down.

Squiffy scuttled for cover, stirring up clouds of coal dust. Straight for the spot he had just left, they went. Mr. Bolt showed a flashlight, directing it upon the sea cock wheel.

"Shut, all right," said the carpenter triumphantly. "I told yuh that couldn't ha' got open itself."

"Looks to me as if it's been open, though," grumbled the mate. "There's leakage round the stem, see."

Cap'n John tried the wheel. It turned easily, but had undoubtedly been shut when he turned it. He shut it again.

"One o' them mysteries," he remarked. "Jest possible the pitchin' o' the ship jarred it open an' shut it again. Anyways, it's shut now, and the water's about out, ain't it, Chips?"

"Be out in half an hour. Shall I leave the hatch off, to let some o' the gas out?"

"There ain't much, but 'twon't do no harm," said Cap'n John. "And soon's you stop pumpin', Mister Bolt, get busy and find that boy."

"I'll find him, all right!" returned the mate. "And I'll find my knife and tobacker, too!"

"What's your knife and tobacker got to do with it? Do you want me to believe as that lad 'ud steal?"

"Shouldn't wonder," the mate retorted. "You lost yer pipe, ain't you? Didn't th' Doctor lose his supper?"

"I won't hear it!" stormed old Cap'n John stoutly. "Green proved as the boy didn't steal that grub. And you ain't heard me say as the boy stole my pipe, neither, Mister Bolt."

"Nobody else, except a crazy man, would want to swipe that pipe, Cap'n Rogers. Stinkin' old gum bucket! None o' this ship's crew 'ud dare put match to it. No, sir!"

The retort seemed to put the mate in a better humor.

"I won't believe it of the boy," said Cap'n John. "There's good in that lad, Mister Bolt. Better try to uncover it rather than try to blacken him."

They left the hold, and Squiffy crept out of hiding. He was half suffocated, and wanted air. It was too light under the hatch, so he went back to his snuggery by the sea cock boards. He felt shame stealing over him. Hearing the loyal defense of Cap'n John had made him resolve to tell everything. Of course, the resolve was not entirely simple to carry out. There were side issues, such as young Green. Squiffy took out the skipper's old pipe. He regarded it intently.

"It ain't no stinkin' ol' gum bucket, neither," he said. "It smokes good." The term recurring reminded him of the mate's unfriendly remarks. " 'Twon't do th' ol' pipe no harm to light her up once more. It'll use up some o' that smart mate's tobacker, too. Chee! Chee! I wisht I could lose th' knife: really lose it."

He cut a pipeful of tobacco, but did not light it at once. Thoughts would come. He was not so sure now that it was right to smoke that pipe again. If he meant to do right, it did not seem exactly right even to waste any more of Mr. Bolt's plug. Thought of Mr. Bolt decided him. Good there might be in Squiffy; but there was certainly a whole heap of sheer human nature, too. He struck a match defiantly.

Then the Doctor's voice was heard on deck, vociferously appraising Cap'n John that someone had rifled the pantry shelves in the night.

Squiffy threw down the lighted match, crammed the pipe in his pocket and started up to face the music and tell the whole truth. At the hatch he almost collided with the mate. Cap'n John was already on his way aft with the Doctor to investigate the mystery. Determined to see the skipper first of all, Squiffy ducked back again and lay low until he was sure the coast was clear. That was not until he heard the mate's voice from the direction of the poop. Then he ducked and dodged behind the boats on top of the house until Cap'n John came from the cabin again with old Sally, red-faced and angry, at his side.

"Cap'n John!" he cried. "Cap'n John!"

Cap'n John and Sally looked around, not immediately locating the sound. Before they spied the boy, the carpenter ran to the hatch, looked over, and ran aft like a wild man, bawling:

"Smoke's comin' outa th' main hatch, sir! She's afire!"

Smoke swirled through the opening, growing

blacker with alarming rapidity. Mr. Bolt made three jumps down the poop ladder.

"Clap on the hatches!" he shouted. "Shut the ventilators! Bosun! Rig the head pump and get the hose along! Call all hands!"

Cap'n John puffed along the deck, letting Mr. Bolt do the shouting for both. As they passed beneath the boats, Squiffy was hanging over the edge of the house, wide-eyed, holding out to them a rich old pipe, a sadly devastated tobacco plug, and a knife.

"That's my knife!" yelled the mate; but he never paused in his work.

"My pipe!" squeaked Cap'n John. Stopping for breath, he turned a red, angry face toward Squiffy. "Boy! you take them things aft, and wait 'til I can talk to you. You go right now an' report to th' Missus! By cracky!"

"Aw chee!" grumbled Squiffy. But he had made his resolution; he climbed down and slunk aft.

Old Sally waited at the head of the ladder. When the boy dared to glance up, he thought she looked far less terrible than he had a right to expect. But just then he had a flash of inspiration about the cause of that fire. He had smoked down there, without thought of consequences!

"Chee!" he muttered. "If they thinks it wuz me, good-night!"

"Come to me, Squiffy!" ordered old Sally. "You're a nice boy, ain't you? Come right up here!"

Squiffy suddenly turned aside, sprang across the deck and up the other ladder, and vanished into the

cabin companionway before old Sally could fairly start turning to intercept him.

Rags almost knocked him over at the stairway foot, vibrating with welcome.

"Yes, y' greedy mutt!" Squiffy hissed. "Yer anybody's dog fer a bone! C'm here!"

"Rags! Oh, Rags!" called Mary from somewhere unseen.

"I wantcha!" muttered Squiffy, and seizing the dog by the skin of his back he dragged him into the pantry, through the aperture, into the hold on top of the case cargo. At the bulkhead he stopped for breath, choking in the strong fumes coming from the coal.

On the other side he heard men moving. Looking over, he saw the light suddenly appear as the hatch was removed. A man dropped down, the hatch was replaced. This was repeated twice; then the mate had six men below, dragging the spouting hose, while the opening was closed upon them. He heard them coughing, swearing; cursing the fire and the smoke. Somebody blundered across the coal to where a red spot glowed through the smoke like the sun through a fog. There was the hiss of steam, the falling of coal, the shout of a frightened man.

"Get up out o' this!" yelled Mr. Bolt. "The coal's slidin' on top o' the fire. Go tell th' Old Man we'll have to open the sea cock and flood her!"

In answer to a signal hammered on the under side of the hatch, a corner was removed. The draught of air fanned the red glow into a fierce blaze. Squiffy heard the skipper sharply order the opening to be

closed, and call for a volunteer to open the sea valve. Somebody dropped down again. The blaze grew.

Squiffy had another inspiration. He crept back and shut the aperture to the pantry.

The man crawling over the coal coughed and choked, keeping on. He reached the ship's side; there was another ominous slide of coal; the fire leaped; the man yelled and scrambled back, hammering for air.

"The boards is burnt 'round the valve! Th' coal is all fell down and covered th' wheel!" he cried as they opened the hatch to him.

"Leave th' hose down and pump her full!" ordered the skipper.

Then the hatch was clapped on, and Squiffy heard no more. But he knew one thing. He knew now that his matches had started that fire. And among other hazy details in his mind was the fact that he had played with that very valve wheel, ignorant of its use; and there had been a long spell of pumping following. He coughed; Rags whined, cringing on his belly. In the blackness he heard the hose spouting water blindly. The steam was suffocating, the smoke blinding, the heat terrific. But right there, over the valve, the blazing boards already set fire to the under side of the deck beams, and the hose was not reaching that spot. Beneath, the boards burned fiercely.

"C'm on, Rags!" breathed Squiffy desperately. "It's me an' youse fer it! Them folks is treated us good. Youse likes th' flapper, dontcha? She's goin' t' get all burnt up if youse don't dig like fury! C'm on!"

The dog followed him as if he understood. Squiffy groped for the hose, eyes and mouth shut, one arm

across his face. He propped the nozzle so that the stream shot upward at the burning beams. Then he fell on his knees, dragged Rags beside him, and fell to work frenziedly scooping up the soft coal with his hands from around the valve.

"C'm on, dig!" he gasped. "Rats, Rags! Atta-boy!"

About the main hatch Cap'n John waddled nervously. Chips sounded the well every few minutes, trying to justify an encouraging report about the water flowing into the hold. But the pumps were slow; intended only for flushing decks; not comparable with the big clearing pumps that kept the ship free from water. Aft old Sally and Mary carried blankets on deck, laying them handy to the boats; the Doctor brought stores and water. The second mate examined the boats and gear. Everything was got ready for the emergency none dared hope would fail to arrive. Old Sally was crying.

"Don't take on, old girl!" Cap'n John bellowed bravely. "We ain't dead yet!"

"I know, John. But we can't find that poor boy anywhere. He must ha' hid from me outa fear, and got shet in. And th' ship's afire under him!"

"He'll come out when it gets too hot, Missus!" shouted Mr. Bolt, stooping to watch the sounding rod as Chips drew it up. The mate started up, holding the jointed rod aloft incredulously.

"She's takin' water now all right!" he exclaimed. "D'ye spose that valve got shook open again, Cap'n?"

Cap'n John looked. His eyes bulged. The water had risen two feet in a few minutes. Steam issued from the decks, creeping through seams and crevices, min-

gling with black smoke and making the outlook less black. The skipper's glance met the mate's. They raised the hatch. As from a vast distance, through smoke and steam, came the piteous whine of a dog, and the strangling, dry, cracked voice of a human being:

"Dig, Rags! Atta-boy! Rats! Rats! Dig, you pup! Not down! Up, Rags! We gotta get out, some way. Can't turn th' wheel no more."

Clapping the hatch back, urged with one impulse, the skipper and mate hurried aft. They knew Squiffy had gone aft. There was but one way into the hold from aft. Neither had given that a thought, because it was bulkheaded off from the coal. But that was the only way they could reach the coal without leaving a draught open. They burst past old Sally, Cap'n John puffing painfully, but keeping up with the nimbler mate. And they tore down the bulkhead, when they had shut the aperture from the pantry, crawled over the coal, in the lessening smoke and steam, and found two grimy, half-dead objects, one four-legged and the other two-legged, dragging their way blindly, instinctively toward the broken bulkhead and freedom.

Squiffy opened his eyes in what he thought must be Heaven until he recognized the faded red curtains over the round porthole. Somebody held a cup of delicious drink to his lips, and Mary's face floated above it. Beside him he heard the lusty lapping of broth and the thump-thump of a dog's tail. He felt like a mummy. Bandages swathed his hands and head

and face. He knew he was in pain; yet something had been done to assuage it. And he remembered what his intention had been on coming aft. He tried to reach his pockets, stammering hoarsely:

"I took your pipe, Mister. It's——"

"Nonsense, boy! I never lost no pipe!" blurted the Cap'n.

"An' th' mate's knife an'——"

"Th' kid's wanderin'! I had 'em all th' time!" said the mate.

Squiffy wondered if he were demented and in an asylum. "I'm sorry I stole them cans o'——"

"My gracious!" squealed old Sally, dabbing her eyes with the cooling swab she was using on the boy's fevered head. "He sure is wool gatherin'! You ain't lost no stores, Doctor?"

"Not a mossel," lied the Doctor nobly. And to make a good job of it he volunteered: "An' that consarned parrot snuck my supper that night. What's he all yammerin' about, stealin'!"

Squiffy let his hand fall, trying to reassure himself by touch of Rags' shaggy coat that he was alive and sane. His bandaged fingers touched a bare burnt spot on Rags, who stopped lapping up soup long enough to say "Wuff!" protestingly, then went on with his business. Squiffy was alive, all right. But sane?

"Anyway, it was me set th' ship afire," he asserted stubbornly. He would hold on to the credit of one act of evil at least. Out on deck men chanted lustily:

"Oh, Shenandoah, I'll ne'er forget you;
Awa-ay, you rolling river!"

"There! That's the toon they sings when they're pumpin'!" he cried triumphantly.

"Poor Squiffy! Poor boy!" soothed Mary, putting the cup to his lips again. "The men are just amusing themselves, that's all. Here, drink this and go to sleep. You must get well and strong, you know, because as soon as we get to port Uncle's going to send you to——"

"Chail?" whispered Squiffy, weakly.

"No, silly! School! Here, drink it!"

Squiffy sank back with a groan. His hand fell upon the rawest spot on Rags' raw back.

"Aw, chee! I'll sure need to be strong!" whispered Squiffy; and Rags, squirming under the touch of his master's hand, yowled ear-splittingly in concurrence.

THE MAN WHO MET A FRIEND

BY LAURIE Y. ERSKINE

THE greatest rewards of adventure lie in the friendships that are made; for the man who has shared a tight place with you in some out-of-the-way portion of this earth is a man whom you will never forget. You may not see him often, and it is not the way of men to write long letters, but you will remember him; and the happiest moments of your life will be those moments when, in unexpected places, under circumstances of which you and he have never dreamed, your comrade of adventures in the past comes face to face with you.

Sometimes the chances that bring such a meeting about are no more extraordinary than such an occasion as requires you to go to the Grand Central Station for a train to New London, there to be tapped on the shoulder as you enter the gates by a man who rode the rapids with you in the Yukon; but sometimes the meeting is attended by such peculiar circumstances as make the occasion a story in itself. For Renfrew and Charlie Mordaunt to meet again, a world war was necessary, and a battle in the air that brought Renfrew down, wounded, to occupy a place on the side lines until he was prepared to fly with the scouts again.

They had come together for the first time in the town of Ledbitter, in British Columbia, where Ren-

frew, seeking a man to expose a group of thugs who were victimizing a mining town, had picked upon the youngster, Charlie Mordaunt. But Mordaunt had been afraid, convinced that he lacked the courage that Renfrew's plan demanded. Renfrew had shown him that he possessed the courage by showing him that fear was worse than death, and that knowledge had made it possible for Charlie Mordaunt to lead a horde of hard men who had thought him a coward. Renfrew had remembered him and, remembering, had always wondered whether the youngster had been able to retain his hold upon that spirit which had made him for that certain time a man. But when the war came, it took Renfrew far away from Ledbitter, and it seemed as if he might never have the opportunity to discover how long a time Mordaunt had been able to sustain that essay into heroism. Then chance brought Renfrew to the sea.

It was several weeks after he had been shot down. The doctors told him that he was not yet fit for combat flying, and he knew that the doctors were right. So he passed his time as the guest of a flying squadron in the north of France; and with an observer, he frequently went up into the air for a quiet, droning visit to the sea. They would soar above the fishing villages and trail their wheels in the ground swell as they played about the bays and dunes of the North Sea coastline.

One day they dropped in for a visit upon the little bay that sheltered a seaplane patrol squadron, and the officers of the Royal Naval Air Service, who didn't often entertain such a champion of the scouts as Cap-

tain Renfrew was in those days, gave them a hearty welcome. Renfrew was curious about their work.

"Submarine patrol," explained Commander Harding, whose lean face was made red by the sea winds and whose clear blue eyes were cold as steel. "We can see submarines from the air when they're twenty feet down, and we drop bombs on them. Depth charges, you know. Most of our casualties are sea casualties. Caused by bad weather; by fog that crashes our machines on the headlands, flying low; by dud engines thirty miles out of sight of land. Then Fritz plays some queer tricks, too. That accounts for some of our men."

"What sort of queer tricks?" asked Renfrew.

"You never know till you meet them. That's what makes them tricks, you know. There are lots of thrills to the work. Why don't you flit over and take up one of our machines?"

Renfrew's eyes sparkled.

"To-morrow?" he asked.

Harding nodded. "To-morrow," he agreed.

In the morning Renfrew alighted on the field of Seaplane Patrol Squadron Twenty-Two, and taxied his little single seater prettily up to the tarmac. Harding met him and took him over to the landing stage.

"Think you can fly 'em?" he asked, as the mechanics brought a dainty two-seater Sop Hydro up to the float. "Just keep her pontoons out of the water, and you're all right. You'll find she tends to catch crabs and trip you up, but if you treat her as a bird that was never meant to touch water, she'll take care of herself—takes off and lights like a bloomin' gull. The

bomb releases are like those on your machine, you'll remember if you need 'em."

He gazed at the lovely 'plane that bobbed gently in the swell with a fondness born of perfect understanding.

"Here's Bentley," he said. "He'll go up with you and show you points of interest on the North Sea. Better put on the 'phones and then you can be chatty. You'll probably want to let him show you the ropes. He's a good youngster. Ben, you met Captain Renfrew yesterday."

The towheaded youth in blue nodded at Renfrew cheerily while he adjusted the goggles that had been reposing high on his forehead.

"I'll have to depend on you for compass course and good advice," smiled Renfrew appreciatively; and he clambered into the pilot's cockpit. Bentley climbed in behind him, and Renfrew got busy with his gadgets. The mechanics brought the machine around so that her prop was over the float, and swung it while Renfrew fed the engine its fuel.

"All clear!" he sang out. And, as the mechanics cleared the propeller, "Contact!" He switched on and the engine roared, but it caught in its roar and spluttered for a moment as he revved it up.

"What's up?" cried Harding, alert as a good host should be for the security of his guest.

"Throttle control bar stuck a little, that's all," replied Renfrew.

"Want another bus?"

But Renfrew had no desire to place the extreme degree of perfection that a flyer demands of his most

minute item of equipment before the courtesy he felt was due his host.

"No, it's all right, thanks," said he; and he had taken off from clear water before he realized that he had made a rather reckless sacrifice to courtesy. Harding was quick to notice the jerk with which the engine picked up, coughed, and burst forth again into full blast as Renfrew made his take off, and he frowned.

"That throttle bar's too confounded sticky," he muttered.

But Renfrew was soaring smoothly through an unclouded sky, making straight for the bronze sunlight that filled the hazy expanse above him, and breathing deeply of the salt sea air through which his propeller forged its way. The sea was a floor of turquoise below him; a floor of turquoise streaked with fair green jade; a floor of many opalescent tints that moved in a rhythmic swell and sent a shower of glittering gold from the many facets of its billows.

"North northwest by two and a half west," came Bentley's voice in the ear 'phones. "Better stick at seven thousand feet for visibility in this haze."

"North northwest by two and a half west it is," replied Renfrew as he tilted into a bank that swept him into the course for which Bentley called.

For some moments they sped through the air in the fine golden sunlight until the land had disappeared and the translucent haze enclosed the moving floor of sea below them in a great circle of shimmering gossamer. Renfrew looked down and then, turning, gazed behind him. There was Bentley, at ease upon his stool, his machine gun poking upward from its ratchet and

his blue eyes smiling into Renfrew's own. Beyond Bentley, the elevators and rudder of the plane, and—nothing else save the far-reaching sea and the opalescent curtain of the mist. Renfrew knew then the thrill of being entirely dependent on his engine. A forced landing here would mean a long gamble between the weather, the water, and the arrival of a rescue tender that might come if the wireless message reached shore.

"Barque to starboard," came Bentley's voice in the 'phone. "Sailing vessel directly off our starboard bow. Better drift over and give a look-see."

Renfrew scanned the water below him for the reported vessel, but it was several moments before his landsman's eye detected the wraith-like object that Bentley had discerned at a great distance. Far below him, to the right of his bow, a tiny form was enshrouded in the haze that hugged the water. It looked like a toy sailboat on an imitation ocean, and Renfrew smiled at the thought of treating seriously so trivial a little fisherman as this barque seemed to be.

"Down and look her over?" he called into his 'phone.

"Just circle over her till I can see what the glasses show," replied Bentley.

That was easy enough, and Renfrew held the 'plane steadily on her course until the wraith of a boat had emerged from the haze and developed into a veritable sailing vessel, which became foreshortened as the 'plane rapidly gained its place above her and sank below them until it was a diminutive object on the floor of water just to Renfrew's right. He banked, then, and made

the image of that sailboat the center of a series of great circles. Bentley, behind him, held the vessel in the field of his glasses while he focused them.

"It's a two-masted schooner," he said. "Fisherman, I think, and the flag is French."

"There's a steamer coming up from the west," said Renfrew. But Bentley, intent on his observations, did not hear him. Renfrew continued to circle, while he tried to keep in view the black smoke that betrayed the coming of the steamer.

"She's afire!" cried Bentley suddenly. And Renfrew's attention was snapped back to the toy sailboat that lay so peacefully on the toy ocean below them. Sure enough, from the forward section of the little schooner a cloud of dark smoke was belching.

"She seems to be signaling us," said Bentley.

"Go down?" queried Renfrew, and dropped in his lovely curve toward the water.

"Righto. May be a fisherman needing help."

Renfrew throttled down and started a series of zigzagging glides toward the water.

"Hello," cried the voice in the 'phone. "There's a steamer, a cargo boat, beating up from westward."

"Told you so," grinned Renfrew. The steamer, little more than a dot in the distant haze, was apparently headed directly toward the schooner. "Wonder if they see her signals," Renfrew thought.

He and Bentley were now about fifteen hundred feet above the schooner, and the smoke that poured from her fo'c'sle no longer obscured the group of men who seemed to rush about her decks intent upon the desperate business of subduing the invisible flames,

while a man on the quarterdeck waved frantically up at them.

"Fire seems to be under the hatches," cried Bentley. "Better not go lower."

Whereupon Renfrew pushed his throttle and found that it would not move forward.

"Better not get lower!" cried Bentley rather sharply. "It may be a trap!"

"Can't help it!" yelled Renfrew. "The throttle bar's jammed!" And he coolly worked the little lever with one hand while with the other hand and his feet he turned the 'plane away from the schooner in a wide curve, and straightened out to alight on the water to the east of her beam.

"A fat lot of help we'll be," exclaimed Bentley nervously. "And I don't like the way they're behaving aboard that craft. *Wow!* It *is* a trap!"

For a high-pitched, staccato rattle arose from the deck of the schooner, and the machine-gun bullets whined through the air about them. Bentley leaped for his gun, but Renfrew halted him.

"Don't fire!" he cried. "They can blow us to bits if we fight!"

Bentley held his fire, and the crew of the schooner evidently respected the flyers' predicament as they saw the 'plane alight on the surface of the sea.

They had hardly touched the water before a boat's crew began to lower the little dinghy that was cradled in the stern of the schooner. Renfrew and Bentley saw the men at work. They saw the tiny boat fall to the water, and the men tumble over the side to man it. Then it waited there, under the stern of its mother

ship, while the oarsmen spoke with one who leaned over the rail.

"What in blazes is their game?" cried Bentley in bewilderment. For the little dinghy was being hauled aboard the schooner once more.

"Scared," suggested Renfrew, while with a cool hand he followed the throttle bar along until he found the bend that jammed it.

"Hardly," said Bentley. "See those signals?"

But Renfrew had disappeared under the cockpit hood.

"What they say?" came his muffled voice.

"International code," retorted Bentley. "They say that they have us under their guns. If we move, they'll blow us out of the water. And if I'm not mistaken, they carry two six-pounders to do it with."

Renfrew came up to the air again.

"When I get this gadget straightened, I'm going to fly up and let you drop a bomb on 'em," he said cheerfully. "Tell 'em that."

"But why aren't they taking care of us? Are they crazy? They can surely see that the engine's ticking over."

Renfrew was examining the vessel shrewdly, and as he did so the seaplane drifted away with the North Sea swell so that his field of vision beyond the schooner was widened.

"They're waiting to trap that steamer," he said quietly. "If the steamer saw them firing on us, she'd have time to get away. But as it is, she's seen us alight as if to parley with a French barque, and will come right along into their trap. Man, I've got to get this

thing fixed!" He dived under the hood again, while Bentley sat and helplessly watched the freighter approach her doom.

The steamer had now emerged from the haze of distance and loomed up as a murky cargo boat of some seven thousand tons, her single funnel belching smoke and the red ensign of the merchant service gayly flapping in her stern. The crew's washing was hanging out on a line below the derrick boom, and the figures of a few men could be seen along the rail. Serenely, with a sort of bluff friendliness in her aspect, she steamed toward the port side of the little schooner that flew the flag of France. And then Bentley noticed that a man on board the schooner was signaling vigorously from a point to starboard of the after deck house, which concealed him from the approaching steamer.

Bentley gazed in puzzlement at the semaphore that the man's arms described. The message was obviously in code; so it could not be meant for Renfrew and himself. Who, then, was the German signaling?

Bentley inspected the heaving body of the water that lay behind and about them, and his heart sank as he descried the slow progress of a little tube that, poking above the surface, moved lazily through the water some hundred yards away. It was a periscope.

"They've got the poor fellows trapped!" he cried to Renfrew. "The schooner's a decoy boat for a sub, and the vermin are making around to get the steamer."

Renfrew arose from his concealment again in time to see the periscope disappear as the submarine slid, like a sea monster, into a depth that would permit her to fire a torpedo without the steamer's sighting her.

"I've freed the throttle bar," murmured Renfrew, his eyes on the advancing steamer. "Now it's just a matter of getting this bolt home. . . ."

Bentley grabbed him by the arm.

"Look!" he cried.

From a point five hundred yards off the steamer's port bow a thin ripple ran swiftly across the water toward the cargo boat, which was now some seven hundred yards due west of the schooner. It was as if some fleet animal of the sea were stealing up unobserved upon its prey.

"Sta'b'rd your helm!" shrieked Bentley. "Oh, why don't they sta'b'rd their helm?"

And as if he heard that cry, the steamer's helmsman threw the ship over to starboard, so that the torpedo struck it a glancing blow abaft the funnel. The black fury of the explosion threw a great mass of water into the air with it, and for a moment the center of the ship vanished behind a column of destruction. The column fell again upon the calm sea, and a gaping hole in the side of the steamer slowly became smaller, as the ship began to settle by the stern.

Immediately a bustle of activity became apparent on the deck of the wounded vessel. Men ran hither and thither, in the orderly chaos of sailormen freeing the lifeboats to abandon a sinking ship.

"Airrh!" exclaimed Renfrew, with fire in his eyes. "I've done it! Shall we make a break for the air and bomb them?"

"Wait!" snapped Bentley. "They've got us covered, and we'd go down before we got off the water. Let 'em get used to us for a minute."

"Look! They're signaling from the steamer!" said Renfrew.

"Good men!" Bentley smiled radiantly. "It's admiralty code. They're telling the schooner to run for it! And they've only a minute to get away!"

It was true. Leaving a sinking ship, the sailors aboard the steamer had lingered long enough to signal that warning to the schooner that they believed to be their friend.

"Now what?" growled Bentley.

As the lifeboats left the side of the sinking steamer, the submarine rose to the surface six hundred yards aft its victim's port quarter, and began to move leisurely around its stern. Submarine captains were obliged to record the identity of all ships they sent down. As the U-boat made its calm survey the schooner gave forth an inward roar, and powerful engines set her in stately motion. At the same time a group of sailors aboard the schooner began to clear away a mass of sailcloth that covered an object over the center hatches.

"It's a twelve-pounder!" whispered Bentley hoarsely. "What are they up to?"

"Going to sink the hulk," replied Renfrew. "Now's our time to fly for it."

Bentley seized his arm even as he pressed the throttle.

"No, they're covering us with a six-pounder in the stern," he warned. "And they've got machine guns, too."

"Can't help it," said Renfrew. "We've got to do our best. If they get us, it'll just be one 'plane missing.

If we get them, it's a U-boat gone and tons of shipping saved."

"They're not going after the survivors!" gasped Bentley; and Renfrew looked up to see the U-boat swing slowly about to bear down on the two lifeboats that were pulling away from the steamer. There were several men on the U-boat's deck, and the two big 5.9 inch guns mounted fore and aft were manned by German sailors. Renfrew was in time to see an officer, presumably the captain, hail the nearest lifeboat. The British sailors kept pulling away from him.

"We've got to get up," said Renfrew quietly, for he remembered ugly stories of survivors being fired upon. "If we let them fire on those boats, we'll never live it down." But he was conscious of the fact that the schooner, presenting her stern to them as she drew up toward the port side of the slowly settling steamer, was covering the 'plane with a gun that bore directly upon them. It seemed a predicament that was utterly hopeless. Yet they might, by chance, gain speed enough to frustrate the German fire.

"Shall I chance it?" he snapped.

"Sure!" cried Bentley, and stared at him with a face as white as a sheet. "But let's shake before we go up." He grinned. "The machine guns," he said.

Renfrew nodded, and took the youngster's proffered hand.

"Cheerio!" he said, and turned to the steamer that he might get the wind from her smoking funnels.

A shot was fired from the schooner as he turned, and he was in time to see the impossible occur. From the depths of the sinking steamer a bell rang noisily.

Instantly an astounding transformation took place. What had seemed to be a deck house on her forward deck collapsed, and a twelve-pound gun was revealed, manned by a half-dozen men. The sailcloth awning that fell from her bridge to the center hatches was torn away, and two six-pounders appeared, while the two lifeboats that remained in the davits forward of the funnel fell apart to reveal the long gray muzzles of two more heavy guns.

This all happened in the split second of the ringing of the bell, and the revealment of those guns was instantly followed by a burst of fire from each muzzle and the rattle of a half-dozen machine guns from the forward bridge. At the same time the white ensign of the British Navy ran, fluttering, up the foremast, and spread its red-crossed emblem to the breeze.

"Good gravy!" yelled Bentley. "It's a Q-ship!"

Then everything happened at once. The schooner seemed absolutely to recoil as the steamer's fire brought down her foremast and swept her decks with the death-dealing shower of the machine guns. The submarine, fairly trapped, started its engines going with a roar as her conning tower was blown into a thousand splinters.

But the Q-ship's fire failed to cripple severely either enemy craft, for it raked the schooner too high, and the destruction of the conning tower, which was only a superstructure of the submarine, left the interior of the U-boat uninjured. The schooner swung about and leveled her twelve-pounder at the Q-ship as the U-boat, propelled by her mighty engines, drew swiftly out of range. The transformed steamer fol-

lowed the submarine with her fire, but failed to gain a hit, while the schooner, at point-blank range, placed a shell in the waist of the wallowing steamer that smashed the six-pound guns to wreckage and scattered their crews into a mass of dead and wounded.

At the same moment Renfrew shoved his throttle home and the seaplane took the air with a mighty roar that carried her soaring from the surface of the water between the British Q-ship and the German U-boat.

Up, up, the seaplane soared, and as she gained height, the two in it saw below them a battle far removed from such naval engagements as modern warfare usually presented. It was a battle such as Drake and Frobisher might have fought. A battle of close quarters between a crippled steamer, heavily awash in the heaving swell, a motor-driven schooner, and a swift-moving submarine that could not submerge.

It was the strategy of every Q-ship, the heroic decoy that lured many a U-boat to her doom, to take the enemy's torpedo fire, appear to abandon the ship, which, being loaded with lumber, could not sink, and then wait until the U-boat approached to identify it, before letting go with all her concealed guns. If she could sink the U-boat with that first fire, she accomplished her grim purpose with no further loss than the explosion of the torpedo might cost her. If she failed to accomplish this, she had to fight a formidable enemy while in a crippled condition.

In this case the gallant Q-ship had not only to fight the submarine that mounted two heavy guns, but it had also to deal with the schooner. As Renfrew

climbed, swiftly adjusting his bomb sights, he saw the submarine, now withdrawn to a distance of two thousand yards from the steamer, turn broadside to its victim and bring both its big guns to bear. The guns were fired even as Renfrew swept about to curve over the U-boat.

The 'plane roared over the submarine and Renfrew let go a bomb. It missed the monster by yards, and Renfrew saw the U-boat plunge with the shock of the depth charge as the explosion sent a column of water high in the air. Then he swung the 'plane about in a steeply banked spiral, and as he did so, he glanced again toward the smoking fury from which sounded the roar of the battling decoy boat and Q-ship. He saw a sheet of flame shoot skyward, and a mass of wreckage ascend from the spot where the schooner had been, and he saw the Q-ship spitting its defiance from a cloud of smoke. Again the guns of the submarine spoke, and the shots registered with a spurt of wreckage in the Q-ship's shattered stern.

Renfrew dipped, and raked the deck of the submarine with his machine guns, and then, swooping upward, he turned skilfully to drop another bomb. Heroically, the Q-ship lumbered toward its enemy as Renfrew's second bomb dropped forward of the submarine and sent its bow high in the air with its explosion.

"Give yourself more room," spoke Bentley's voice in the 'phone; and Renfrew swept far ahead of the submarine while a burst of shrapnel tore through his fabric as an intimation that the U-boat had its anti-aircraft gun in action.

He turned again, and saw the Q-ship wallowing

painfully toward the U-boat. The schooner had disappeared, leaving only a mass of wreckage to mark its resting place; and the Q-ship, crippled and shattered into a shapeless hulk, gamely engaged its remaining foe. Renfrew felt a keen and exhilarating thrill of admiration for the men who manned that wreck, and he voiced it into his 'phone as he swept over the submarine once more.

"We'll get 'em this time! We *have* to get 'em!" he cried. And he saw a burst of flame and splinters arise from the fore deck of the Q-ship as a shell from the submarine exploded.

With infinite care Renfrew gazed through his bomb sight, and the single movement with which he released that bomb contained all his nerve and vitality. He threw the 'plane over on its side as he heard through the 'phone the exclamation with which Bentley greeted the shot, and the two flyers watched the bomb descend. The submarine was moving, while the shells of the Q-ship fell all about it, and the bomb seemed headed for the open water on the starboard bow. But just as the bomb swept downward, the Q-ship's fire crowded the U-boat's port bow, and it veered to starboard. The bomb struck home just forward of the conning tower. A ghastly burst of smoke and flame concealed everything save the U-boat's stern, which plunged high out of the water. Then the air cleared, and they saw the massive submarine shoot into her last dive, leaving a mess of oil and wreckage in the vortex that her plunge created.

The 'plane was turned over like a tiny kite by the concussion and Renfrew came out of the disturbance

in a spin that he conquered only when a bare three hundred feet above the water. Coolly he straightened her out, and sweeping around the bow of the Q-ship, upon which the only sign of life was the smoke that still drifted from her funnels, he landed neatly beside her.

From a great distance the lifeboats were coming back. They seemed the only sign of life upon the calm and slowly heaving surface of the sea. Renfrew taxied up to the edge of the ravaged steamer, and hailed the silent, wallowing hulk.

From the shattered chaos of her deck a group of three men appeared. Men with black faces, which were marked with blood.

"Anything we can do?" yelled Renfrew.

"Nothing, thanks," cried one of the men cheerily. "A wireless says we can expect assistance at any moment. But stand by a minute. Captain Mordaunt wishes to thank you."

Renfrew climbed from his cockpit and deftly jumped to the slippery deck of the Q-ship, and as he did so two sailors, black with the stains of battle, came forward bearing between them a young man who leaned heavily on their supporting arms.

"You saved the game, sir," said the young captain, whose face was so smeared with grime as to be quite unrecognizable. "If you hadn't—good heavens, it's Renfrew!" he cried.

And that is how Renfrew met for the second time Charlie Mordaunt of Ledbitter, British Columbia; and that is how Renfrew discovered that the man who had been afraid he lacked the courage of a man had

found a greater courage than most men possess. Mordaunt had enlisted in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve at the same time that Renfrew had enlisted with the cavalry. It had taken a war to bring them together again, and what adventures a war could bring to men who volunteered for such perilous service as sailing the Q-ships of the fleet!

THE TRIUMPH OF SCAR-FACE

BY KENNETH GILBERT

FIERCE sunlight beat down on the North Pacific, which was placid, save for the eternal ground-swells that roll across watery leagues from storm centers in the China Sea. Nothing broke the glassy oiliness of these waves; no ships were in sight, no birds wheeled near the surface, and no flying-fish darted in clouds in their short, skittering flight. Except for the dark bulk that moved gently with the heaving swells, the expanse was tenantless.

That bulk, however, was Scar-Face, the giant sperm whale or cachalot, far from his accustomed waters. He was nearly seventy feet long, and he weighed an appalling number of tons; yet he floated as buoyantly as though made of cork. His great flippers were submerged as he lay there; yet his tail was spread flat on the surface like a miniature island. His underjaw, set with mighty teeth, and extending backward one fourth of his body length, hung straight downward in lifeless fashion. At first glance, it would have seemed that he was dead; yet the small piggish eyes gleamed with intelligence. Scar-Face had just awakened from a brief nap, the first in many days.

For he was on a long quest. All the way from warm Southern waters to the rocky shores of the Washington coast he had come in search of the mate who had

vanished inexplicably. For weeks he had fruitlessly plumbed unutterable depths and quartered many leagues of sea in his hunt for her.

Old and barnacled was Scar-Face, aged in years as man counts them, yet in reality no more than in the prime of life. Across his blunt nose was a white cicatrice, where an ill-aimed bomb lance had "creased" him many years before. Scar-face had avenged that affront to his own satisfaction, and the little whaling schooner, with a thoroughly frightened Portuguese crew, was lucky enough to make Callao, while all hands manned the pumps to keep out the sea water which poured through seams the cachalot had opened in her sides with his battering-ram prow. Before he finished with her, he had added to the collection of harpoons fastened in the blubber back of his head, a veritable frill of them. The names of whaling ships known in the seven seas could be read in rusting, stamped letters on the shanks of these heavy iron spears; ships forgotten decades ago—lost or hulked. Old men who had once been skilled harpooners could boast that they had "fastened" to Scar-Face; yet the great cachalot lived on to defy them.

A roamer, a rambler of the Pacific along the west coast of the twin continents he had become, and the years but added to his strength and craft and fame. More than one whaling ship had passed him up rather than court the disaster almost sure to ensue if the big bull were wounded.

The great length of Scar-Face quivered as he came awake. His flippers fanned the water gently, and a tremor passed through the mighty flukes of his tail.

He was about to resume his quest, and woe be unto the thing which crossed his path to balk him!

Another shiver; then his body arched as, with a shrill whistling, he drew in vast lungfuls of air. The flippers delivered a curving stroke; the tail dug into the water, and Scar-Face "sounded" for the bottom.

Down, down through the depths he went, while the light changed from golden to pale green, and darkening blue, until it was quenched at last in Stygian blackness. The pressure grew intense, but he gave it no heed.

Lower and lower, past the rock ledges where the halibut, dead-white things with staring eyes, were feeding. Although Scar-Face had a throat large enough to swallow a man—he belonged to the only type of whale so constructed—he paid no attention to these fish. He was looking for bigger game.

Down and still down, until at last he straightened out and began working easily through a vast crevice on the very floor of the sea. The eyes of the ooze-folk —such of them that had eyes—stared curiously at him. Continually he drove through forests of seaweed. Sluggish fish, some of them of enormous size, moved away at his approach; snake-like creatures sank deeper into the soft mud as he neared.

At last he came to a place where no fish swam and no living things crawled. It was impenetrably black, and seemed to hint of a vague but terrible menace. A sheer wall of rock loomed above a wide shelf, and on the face of this somber bulwark the night-seeing eyes of the cachalot descried the mouth of a cave. He curved toward it.

Seaweed was everywhere; from the mouth of the cave, long and thick tendrils swayed toward him, settled about his head—and suddenly fastened! At the same instant, the cachalot's long underjaw dropped like an unhinged trapdoor, then snapped upward sharply, shearing clearly through the rope-like strands.

At the first stroke the tendrils writhed convulsively; then something terrifying happened. From the blackness of the cave appeared like magic two fearsome, baleful eyes, the size of saucers, and by their own lambent, phosphorescent glow, revealing a gaping, parrot-like beak beneath. Like lightning, the cachalot, the only living thing which dares face the giant squid in its own deep-sea lair, lunged for the monster, and the battle was on.

The squid, whose eight arms were thicker at the base than a man's thigh, glued itself to the side of the whale's head, and sought with all the tremendous strength of those fearful tentacles to crush out the life of its natural foe. Like some huge, warty growth it clung there, while the tentacles crept gropingly, and tautened.

Scar-Face, accustomed to such battles, for this was his staple food, went about the matter in his own methodical way. Again he lowered his underjaw.

Instantly the arms of the devilfish looped themselves about his head and upper jaw, and drew tight. Then, smash went that great underjaw, and the feelers were cut off as smoothly as with a keen ax. The squid writhed in agony, and sought a new grip. Again Scar-Face dropped his underjaw, and waited, and again it sheared off the gristly arms of the sea-devil.

At last the squid, with all but two of its arms amputated, loosed its hold and sank back in an effort to escape. Quick-witted for an animal with such a small brain, Scar-Face bowed himself, and the clash of his jaws cut the squid in two. They chopped again and again, until the monster was no more than quivering, jelly-like chunks of flesh, which Scar-Face bolted. Soon all that remained to mark the spot where the devilfish once had its lair were the tips of the tentacles.

Scar-Face curved upward. He had now been under water more than half an hour and needed a fresh supply of oxygen. Up through the darkened water, until it changed to green and at last golden, he went; then came the glorious sunlight itself.

With a noise like the pop-valves of a dozen locomotives loosed suddenly, Scar-Face blew—a tall geyser of mist. He blew until he had drained from his lungs the last vestige of foul air and water; then, refilling them with a mighty intake, he blew again. Once more he did it, and then, with his air chambers thoroughly recharged, he curved again for the sea floor, for he had not finished feeding. At that moment, however, there came a sharp pain in the blubber back of his left flipper, and out of the tail of one eye he caught sight of something that threw him into furious rage.

On the trail of northward-bound seals had come three orcas, or killer whales. Plentiful enough in South Atlantic waters, it was not very often that they reached this far north on the Pacific side.

A species of dolphin they were, each close to thirty feet in length, powerful-jawed creatures with speed and courage. With their sharp teeth and utter fe-

rocity, they were as voracious as sharks. The sight of the great cachalot rising to the surface had swerved them from their course, and like wolves they had closed in. The leader, outstripping the rest, had been first to reach the goal, and had gashed the whale's side.

With a furious stroke of his tail, Scar-Face whirled and charged, but the killer, smaller and more speedy, merely passed under the whale's body and struck again. At the same time, the other orcas flung themselves at Scar-Face's throat. Yet they were few in number, and never before had they tackled a cachalot of this size and fierceness.

The second slash that Scar-Face received seemed to drive him insane. He flung half of his body out of the water, and then plunged head downward, dealing the surface a cracking blow with his flukes.

The suddenness of this move caught one killer napping. He had just come up preparatory to an underwater slash at the whale's belly, and the flukes of the cachalot smashed him full across the head. Thereafter, he took no more interest in the fight, but lay there stunned and quivering.

Down went Scar-Face to an abysmal depth, and the remaining killers followed him for a time, but at last turned back to watch for his reappearance.

Minutes passed, and then a quarter of a mile distant the water upheaved violently, and a lofty plume of mist proclaimed the presence of the giant. Like launched torpedoes, the two orcas shot toward him.

But he did not seek flight, contrary to whale custom when attacked by killers. Instead, he charged at them,

as though he were now determined to end this battle by taking the aggressive. The orcas parted, and struck at him as he passed. He whirled and came after them again.

But they were too quick. And then Scar-Face fell back on the guile which distinguishes the great bull cachalot, as many whalemen will bear witness. He hurled himself full speed after one orca, while the other raced alongside of him, ready for another cutting stroke.

Scar-Face let the second killer get in just so close; then, like a lightning flash, he spun about and slashed with his long, beam-like underjaw.

It seemed that the surprised orca was actually within the whale's mouth as those jaws began to close; yet the killer was incredibly fast. Nevertheless, before he could escape utterly, the jaws did come together, and the sharp teeth cut through tough muscle and bone along the orca's tail. Crippled, unable to swim, the killer, struggling frantically, began to sink. Scar-Face turned on his surviving enemy.

That astute assassin, however, apparently had decided that enough was enough. Alone, he stood no chance with the cachalot, and he knew it. Away he went toward the horizon. After him went the victorious bull, his fighting blood now thoroughly aroused. But the orca was too speedy for him, and presently Scar-Face turned away.

Once more he was on the quest that had brought him so far north. He forged on, alternately "sounding," and then rising to blow stertorously.

Once a school of blackfish crossed his path, and he

charged among them until they fled in terror. Though whales themselves of goodly size, and numerous, they had no desire to dispute the right of way with the giant cachalot. On and on he went, into the north.

The weather was undergoing a change now. The sun was obscured by clouds, and little breezes, preliminary puffs that heralded a southeast gale, rippled the water. Swifter than an ocean liner, Scar-Face drove ahead unmindful of the moods of the weather. It was in mid-afternoon, as he came to the surface to blow, that he marked the sign he had traveled so many miles to find.

A mile to the left, a narrow column of mist shot skyward, spreading out like some gigantic flower unfolding its petals. As he turned toward it, the sun came from behind a cloud bank, and revealed the stark outline of a ship, close to where the distant whale had spouted. A red flash leaped from the ship's bow, and a heavy detonation rolled across the water. The distant whale blew again.

But Scar-Face had no eyes for the ship; he knew only that there was another whale, probably his mate. Nor did he hear the low thunder of the harpoon gun, for, with a mighty whistling intake of breath, he "sounded."

For a week the steam-whaler *Arcturus* had searched the North Pacific in vain for big game. The huge mammals were not to be found. Day after day the vessel cruised, while her lookout in the crow's nest swept the horizon with powerful glasses, watching for the telltale plume of mist. Day after day, Tomasino, the gunner, lolled on the fo'c'sle near his weapon, which,

loaded with a heavy flanged harpoon, was mounted on a swivel, with tubs of line beside it. Captain Svendssen, master of the *Arcturus,* paced the deck, and marveled at his bad luck.

But one afternoon, there came down from aloft that soul-stirring cry:

"Blo-o-o-ows!"

In an instant the crew, which had been puttering at minor tasks, came to life. Men stowed gear in a hurry.

"Vere-avay?" demanded the skipper, springing into the lower rigging.

"Three points off port bow. *Blo-o-o-ows!* Looks like a sperm, sir!"

Sperm! *Cachalot!* The suggestion had an electrifying effect. Seldom had the *Arcturus* found one of the giants in these waters. A big cachalot was a haul indeed, with high-grade oil to be taken from the blubber, and barrels of spermaceti, or clear oil, in the "case," that chamber within the head. A real prize!

Captain Svendssen barked an order at the helmsman, and the *Arcturus* came around until she bore in the direction the lookout had indicated.

"Blo-o-o-ows!" yelled the lookout again. Then a minute later:

"Looks like a big cow, sir. Comin' straight for us, four bells and a jingle!"

The skipper cupped his hands about his mouth.

"Tomasino! Clear avay de gun, and stand by. Ve take her on de run!" To the helmsman, he ordered:

"Hold her steady, so!"

Minutes passed; then from aloft:

"She's comin' up——"

"Rr-r-oom!" went the harpoon gun, and a cloud of smoke rolled from the vessel's bow. Like an arrow, the long-shanked shaft sped through the air, carrying rope with it. Tomasino sprang to the tubs, and watched the line to see that it did not kink. The head of the harpoon vanished into a brownish-black mountain just rising to the surface.

"Good shot!" roared the skipper. "Ve're fast to her!"

With a fearful surge the mountain disappeared, an agonized lash of flukes marking the spot, and then the line began to run out so rapidly that it fairly smoked. Tomasino and a deck hand hastily bent more line to the lowering coil in the last tub; it would never do to snub the whale short. If, luckily, the harpoon had penetrated deeply enough, the big mammal would soon rise to go into its death flurry at the surface.

But apparently the whale was not hard hit. Down, down it went, and the gunner, with Captain Svendssen beside him, began to look worried.

"Two hundred fadom," said the skipper.

"Eet's a cach'lot, sir," Tomasino reminded him. Then: "She's comin' up!"

The wounded leviathan seemingly had come to the conclusion that by merely "sounding" it could not free itself. The line slacked away rapidly.

"Starboard boat avay!" yelled the skipper. "She's not det!"

Burson, the first mate and a seasoned whaleman, understood exactly what was needed. The whale was to be lanced from a boat as soon as she appeared. The

gunner might be able to land another harpoon with the gun, but that possibility could not be chanced.

Blocks rattled and creaked as the double-ended craft dropped to the water. Four men sprang to the oars, while Burson grasped the long steering sweep, and a man in the bow, gripping a lance, made ready. "Way all!" came the order, and the boat shot from the side.

A mountain of water was rising four hundred yards away.

"Blo-o-o-ows!" yelled the lookout excitedly. The longboat sped toward the spot. Suddenly, the lookout shrilled:

"Big bull astern! Comin' hand over fist!"

The skipper ripped out a startled exclamation.

"Back to de ship!" he yelled to the boat's crew. But Burson, keen on the work ahead, did not hear; the creak of oars and rush of water had drowned the captain's words.

From the mound of water, the wounded cow emerged, shaking herself like some huge dog, as though she could dislodge the cruel harpoon set in her side. She spouted twice, but did not attempt to "sound." Instead, she lay there, threshing the water aimlessly with her flippers. It was Burson's chance.

"Give way, hard!" he snapped in an undertone, for he knew that the cow had not seen him, and he would avoid alarming her until he could get within striking distance.

The boat drove ahead, oars silenced. Bigger and bigger before them loomed the female cachalot, and Burson could see that the harpoon was insecurely fas-

tened at best; merely the flanges had penetrated the tough hide and blubber. An unusual strain would tear it free.

"Way enough!" came his whisper. "Stand by, you in the bow. Ready! Now——

"Starn all! Starn all!"

He screamed the command, for an awe-inspiring thing was happening. The boat was less than forty feet from the cow, and sliding rapidly through the water under its own momentum. Something caused Burson to look down in the water alongside.

What he saw was the vast bulk of Scar-Face rising like the bottom of the sea, directly beneath the boat. Yet the giant cachalot at that moment intended no harm. He did not know what was going on; he had merely come to rejoin his mate.

An oarsman glanced over the side, and shrilled echo of the mate's command, at the same time throwing his strength against his own sweep. Backward went the boat, but it was suddenly lifted high in the air. Then, stern foremost, it slid off the glistening, rounded back of the great bull, capsizing and hurling its occupants into the water.

Like a submarine mountain lifted by an earthquake, Scar-Face appeared, and blew contentedly, with a deafening noise. He was at the side of his mate once more. He blew again, as the terrified whalemen in the water struck out frantically to put distance between themselves and the giant.

In the bow of the *Arcturus,* Tomasino, the gunner, gave way to the excitement of the moment. In panic,

he slammed home another harpoon in the gun, hastily aimed the weapon, and pulled the trigger. Captain Svendssen's roar of protest was blotted out in the thunder of the discharge.

The iron spear hurtled through the air, ripped through the blubber on Scar-Face's back, and slid off. At that moment, the small eye of the bull cachalot saw the ship.

The sharp, stinging pain he could associate with but one thing—the ship. With a whistling grunt of anger, as he drew air deep into his lungs, he curved his long length until his broad, blunt nose pointed straight at the vessel, and "sounded."

Tomasino fell to his knees, crossing himself. Svendssen seized a backstay. Those of the crew that were on deck threw themselves flat in anticipation of the shock.

It came; a shuddering impact that shook the *Arcturus* from main-truck to keelson. Below, there was a succession of crashes, as loosely stowed gear was jarred from its place. The masts groaned and creaked threateningly. Svendssen's feet went out from under him.

A sustained jarring and shivering that lasted for perhaps three seconds, like a temblor; then it was gone.

"Hees haid glanze off ze keel!" cried Tomasino. "One tam before, I remembaire——"

But his recollections were cut short by the sudden activity of the female. Perhaps in that brief moment when the great bull had been near her, he had communicated to her a command. Perhaps she merely saw

him go, and followed, for with a final blast from her spout hole, and a whistling intake of air, she "sounded."

Tomasino jumped for the line, which was paying out so rapidly that a thin blue spiral of smoke rose from the chock through which it was reeved. The gunner, however, dropped the rope instantly, as it burned his fingers. It kinked. There was a sharp jerk, but the line was strong. The strain on it vanished. The cow whale was free.

Captain Svendssen came to life shouting orders. Already another boat was being lowered to pick up the swimming whalemen. Their own craft was a half-submerged wreck; yet none of them were hurt.

As they were hauled aboard, the skipper, mouthing things in his own tongue, hurried below to look for breached seams in the vessel's bottom. Burson and the rescued men disappeared, to don dry clothes, and man ship, for the southeaster was close upon them. Smoke belched from the *Arcturus'* funnels as she began to move through the water.

A mile to the southward, twin plumes of mist showed in the last rays of the sinking sun before it disappeared behind a cloud bank. Scar-Face had found his mate, and was content. Southward they were going to warmer waters and deeps on an ocean floor that they knew well.

They blew again, and then, almost shoulder to shoulder, wounds forgotten, they steered for the southern horizon, into the face of the rising sea.

THE WRECK OF THE MAIL STEAMER

BY SIR WILFRED T. GRENFELL, K.C.M.G., M.D.

THE northwest coast of Newfoundland is no favorite with our seafarers in the fall of the year. The long, straight, rock-bound shore line for eighty miles in one stretch offers no shelter whatever even to the small vessels that ply to and fro along it in pursuit of their calling. Yet, as great shoals of codfish frequent the cold waters of the north shore of the Gulf, just as soon as the frozen sea permits it in spring, swarms of fishing craft, of all sizes, from all the Newfoundland coasts, and even from as far south as Gloucester, push their way "down North" in pursuit of the finny harvest. On the Newfoundland vessels women and children often come, the women helping to cure the fish and cook for the men, the children because they can't be left behind.

Uncle Joe Halfmast had not been north for some years, for he had never liked the sea and, like many another of our handy fishermen, he had developed great talents as a carpenter. But this year the people of Wild Bight were building a church, and had induced Uncle Joe to come down and lead them. It was a late season; the fall weather had been so wet and "blustersome" that the men found it impossible to dry their fish for shipment as usual, and were consequently late

getting ready for the return south. Moreover, the church had to be sheathed in before Christmas, so that, when spring came round, the work would not have to be done over again.

The one little mail steamer which served three hundred miles of coast was unusually crowded with passengers and wrecked crews, and it had twice passed Wild Bight without calling on the southern journey, owing to the impossibility of making the Cove in northwest gales. Indeed every inch of space aboard her had been already occupied long before she reached us. Thus for three long weeks we had been waiting for a chance to go south.

Winter had set in in real earnest. Ice was making everywhere, and to offset our anxiety the whole Cove was secretly rejoicing that we might be compensated by Uncle Joe having to spend the winter with us. He was justified a little by the fact that everyone knew his attitude to rough seas, and that if he returned he had promised to take back with him Susie Carless' derelict baby—a tiny piece of flotsam—with no natural guardian to "fare" for it. And near Christmas is no time for sending babies traveling round our northwest coast. Uncle Joe said nothing—he never did—and the church grew steadily under his hands.

"I'm not worrying," was Uncle Joe's motto. "I leave that to Him that watches over us," he would add, if he was in a real talkative mood.

So as a matter of fact no one was surprised when, one day after Michaelmas, a familiar fussy whistle broke the absolute silence of the harbor just at the first streak of dawn, and kept restlessly repeating itself as

if to say, "Last chance—last chance—last chance for the year. Hustle, hustle, hustle." Sorry as they were to lose him, all hands went to help Uncle Joe off, and give the baby those last touches that only women's hands are allowed "to be able for" on our coast.

The little vessel was crowded for her accommodation; badly overcrowded. But she was as fine a little sea vessel as money and human skill could make her and through many a gale of wind she had safely carried our friends. It was bitterly cold, the thermometer being actually away below zero, and our weatherwise people knew that something was brewing to windward that boded no good to a small boat however staunch, with only our long miles of harborless coast under her lea. Some at the risk of appearing self-interested urged the old man to stay right on through the winter, and, with that unbounded hospitality that is so universal a characteristic of our northern people, were offering him a home, "baby and all." But Uncle Joe's philosophy is proof against any fears, indeed his faith is such real simple working material all through his life that the cynic calls it fatalism. So, as from those who saw St. Paul off on his long sea journey from the beach at Ephesus, not a few prayers went up for their friend and his helpless charge, as the little column of smoke once more disappeared into the sullen darkness that hung on the horizon under the southern sky, while the ominous soughing of the sea note on the rocks sent all hands back to make everything fast, even about the small homes on the land.

The storm did not actually break till after dark that night but slow come is long last with us, and it

will be still longer before that Christmas gale ceases to blow in our memories.

The mail steamer was lost in it, violently blown out of the water on that evil coast. But these happenings are not strange in our world and we never got the story till the following year when one fine Sunday morning I happened to drop into young Harry Barncy's home, a little wooden cottage on the glorious sandy beach at L'Anse au Loup in Labrador.

Harry was enjoying a morning pipe of peace, with his dark embryo Vikings playing round the door. This was my reward for a Sunday visit. For it is as easy to catch a weasel asleep as Harry with time to burn from midnight Sunday till the next Day of Rest comes round.

A big liner had run ashore close to us only a week before, and was now an abandoned wreck lying well out of water on the north side of Burnt Island, so we fell to talking of wrecks, and the topic of the loss of our mail steamer came up. To my amazement he said, "Yes, I knows about her, Doctor, I was fireman aboard when she was cast away."

"You? What have you to do with steamers?"

"Oh, they shipped me and poor Cyril Manstock as they couldn't get men south. I'd acted runner before, but it was Cyril's first voyage, and he died after of consumption, as you know. They says it was that chill did it."

"Tell us about it, Harry. We heard that a dog saved all hands by carrying a line ashore. I've been crazy to get the facts from an eye witness."

"I wasn't much of an eye witness till we were high

and dry, but I saw the dog do his bit, Doctor, and he certainly did it all right.

"We knew below decks by six o'clock—that's just at dark—that it would be a fight for life," he began. "What was left of our coal was all dust, and we'd had trouble keeping steam with it even in smooth water. We were anchored then, right on the straight shore, landing some freight for the village at Cowhead. The wind was already rising and the sea beginning to make.

"My watch was from eight to twelve. But I was a new hand and wanted to give her every chance, so I went on at six to watch that the fires were kept clear and a good head of steam when we made a start. It did seem an awful time delaying, and I wished a hundred times that we would throw that freight overboard.

"I guess I was a bit excited. But when at last the bell did go, we were all ready below. It was a hard fight, however, from the first. For the boat was small and we knew she couldn't do much in a dead hard sea. Her propeller comes out and she races, and it's no soft job trying to fire at the best of times. She wasn't so bad first out in the spring either. But like everything else, she had run down with hard usage and at the end of the long season she couldn't do her best by a long way. However, as I said, we had a full head of steam when the gong rang at last and, for a time, it looked as if we might make it by standing right out to sea.

"The fierce dust in the stokehole from the powdery coal and the heavy and quick rolling soon made our eyes blind and our throats dry, and before my watch was out at midnight I just had to go up for water. I

found the doors were all sealed up with ice, so had to crawl out through a ventilator to get that drink. I hadn't been up two minutes, it seemed, before the chief sent for me to hurry down again, as the steam was going back. I was only second fireman really on my watch, but the first, a Frenchman who had been at it seven years, was an oldish fellow and was getting all in. At midnight watches were called, but both of us stuck to it for we were losing steam again. Water was now washing up over the plates of the engine room, and we were wet and badly knocked about by the ship rolling us off our legs when we tried to shovel in coal.

"At two o'clock the old man gave in altogether and went up, and I never saw him again until it was all over. Cyril was in as trimmer, and he came in to help me. Every time I opened the fire-box door Cyril would grab me by the waist and hold on hard, but in spite of it I got thrown almost into the fire one time by the ship diving as I let go to throw the coal in."

Harry here showed me a big scar across his arm and one on his face. "I got these that time," he remarked, "just to remember her by.

"The water was rising then in the engine room, and the pumps had got blocked so we couldn't pump it out. We didn't think she was leaking but we heard after some portholes had been stove in, and she took in water every time she rolled. We got the pumps to work again after a while. But the doors being frozen up above us we had no way to get rid of our ashes, and they were washing all around in the engine room, and it was impossible to keep the runways clear.

"The worst of it was that now the water was in the

bunkers, and mixed up with the coal making it into a kind of porridge. It was just like black mud to handle, and you couldn't get it off the shovel until you banged the blade against the iron fire-bars.

"So steam began to drop again, and went so low that our electrics nearly went out and we got repeated orders from the bridge for more steam and more steam. It appears we were making no headway at all with only eighty pounds' pressure and, in fact, were slowly being driven sideways into the cliffs. We worked all we could, but things went from bad to worse, the water rose and splashed up against the fire box making clouds of steam, so though the dust was laid, what with the steam and the darkness, and the long watch, we couldn't keep her going. Moreover, it seemed as if we would be drowned like rats below there, and I tell you we wouldn't have minded being on deck, cold as it was.

"We heard afterward that one of the stewards had been fishing on this part of the coast. He knew every nick and corner, and said there was a little sandy cove round the cape where a small head of rock might break the seas enough to let us land, for they knew on deck now that the ship was doomed. For my part I knew nothing, but that work as we would the steam gauge would not rise one pound. Beyond that, what happened didn't even interest us. We hadn't time to worry about danger.

"One sea did, however, make us madder than others. Something had been happening on deck. The heavy thumps like butting ice had reached us down below. It turned out to be the lifeboat that had been

washed out of davits and went bumping all down the deck, clearing up things as it went. Anyhow something came open and as we were getting coal from the lea bunkers a lot of icy water came through the gratings and washed us well down, sweaty and grimy as we were. Somehow that seemed to set my teeth again, and we had the satisfaction of seeing the steam crawl once more to 100 pounds.

"The bridge must have got on to it at once and noticed we were making headway again. The fact was we were now rounding the Cape called St. Martin's. We knew they knew, for they again called us for still more steam—thinking we had got the top hand. It so happened that a long shoal known as The Whale's Back was now the only barrier we had to weather. But till this spurt, hope of doing it had almost gone. Well, all I know is that suddenly there was a scrape—a bumpety, bumpety, bump, and then a jump that made us think we were playing at being an airplane—and then on we went as before. She was making water more rapidly, but beyond that we knew nothing. It was rising now to our knees, nearly, and any moment might flood the fires. We had actually been washed right over the tail end of the whaleback reef, the tremendous ground sea having tipped us right over, almost without touching.

"They say it was only ten minutes or so more to the end—it seemed hours. The motion had changed and we knew we were before the sea. Then suddenly there was a heavy bump, that made us shiver from deck to keelson, then she seemed to stop, take another big

jump, and then do the whole thing once more. We were on the beach and the water was flooding into the hold.

"Cyril had gone some time before, played out. I could see nothing for steam but waded toward the 'alloway' into the engine room. There also everything was pitch dark but I knew, by feeling, which way to go. It seemed a long while, but at last I found the ladder, and made a jump to hustle out of the rising water. My head butted into something soft as I did so. It was our second engineer—he had been at his post till the end.

"There was only one chance now for escape. It was the ventilator. I was proud I had learnt that in the night. It did not take me long to shin up through it and drop on the companion clinging onto the edge.

"The icy wind chilled me to the bone and sheets of spray were frozen over everything. A sea striking her at that moment washed right over me, but before the next came I was behind the funnel, hanging on for life to one of the stays. Another dive between seas landed me in the saloon and from there I dropped down, and climbed to the fo'c'sle to get some dry clothes."

"That's all you know, I suppose?"

"About all," he answered, "except that I had to go some miles when I landed to get shelter, and got no food till next night."

"Did anyone thank you for your work?"

"Not yet," he answered with a smile.

"What steam had she when you struck the last time?" I asked.

"A full hundred pounds," and a gleam of joy that endures lit his eyes—that joy that assures us of the real significance of life.

I was admiring the church at Wild Bight this fall—having blown in—in one of our periodical medical rounds. Nothing was further from my mind than the wreck of the previous winter when suddenly I noticed the familiar features of old Uncle Joe peering at me from behind a pillar. In a moment I saw him again, leaving the harbor with his precious baby, and I wondered how it had all ended.

"Well, you see, Doctor, about daylight the ladies' cabin got flooded out and they were all driven out of that; all the passengers that could, crowded into the little saloon on deck. The baby did not seem to mind it at all and as there was no use going on deck, even if we had been able, that's where I took it. After we struck, however, and the seas were washing partly over the ship, I went out to see if there were any chance for us. The captain, who had never left the bridge, was there. His cheeks were all frostbitten. He had already launched a boat and was trying to get some men landed.

"It was broad daylight, a little after midday, and we were right under a big cliff, so close that you could almost touch it. The projecting head of the cliff sheltered the forepart of the vessel fairly well, but a thundering surf was beating on the beach. The boat was soon glad to be hauled in again. She was smashed and filled, and the men had nearly been lost. So we all fell to it, and tried to get a line ashore.

"There were men there now from the shore who had seen us. They were watching us from above the breakers, and evidently understood what we were doing. For when at last we flung the line into the water, they rushed down and tried to get it. But the backwash carried it always beyond their reach. One of them ran up to a cottage near by and came back with a jigger, and as the seas washed the rope along, tried to fling it over, and hook the line. But they somehow couldn't do it.

"Then I suddenly saw there was a big dog with them, rushing up and down, and barking as they tried for the line. All of a sudden, after they seemed to have done their best and failed, the dog rushed down into the sea, held the rope in his teeth till the tide ran out, and then backed with it till the men grabbed it. They took the line up the cliff, and I helped rig a chair on it in which we tied the passengers, and so sent them everyone ashore safely. No, I didn't even get my feet wet myself. You see I had my rubbers on. The baby? Oh, I tied the baby up in a mail bag and sent him ashore by himself. They told me when they opened the bag to see what was in it, the baby just smiled at them, as if it had only been having a bit of a rock in the cradle of the deep.

"We were home for Christmas after all. And somehow, Doctor, I had my mind made up to how it would be about that when I said good-bye to them that morning at Wild Bight.

"The folks all got together and gave that dog a hundred-dollar collar but the poor owner had to sell the dog, collar and all, a little later to get food."

HUNTING THE BIGGEST GAME

BY ARTHUR HEMING

I'LL bet that brute weighs more than a hundred and sixty thousand pounds!" exclaimed Captain Searle, turning to me as the great beast disappeared.

"What, eighty tons? How on earth do you make that out?"

"A ton to the foot is well under the mark, and if that animal doesn't go near eighty foot I'm no judge."

A moment before we had beheld a monster that, as afterward proved, measured eighty-two feet in length and weighed more than the combined weight of eleven hundred men. It was a blue whale. For five hours we had vainly tried to get within range, but no sooner would we head the steamer for the monster, stop the engine, and swing the cannon in position, than the capricious brute would sound.

A cow whale, she seemed to be making game of us, for on returning to the surface she invariably came up in some unexpected quarter which allowed her ample time to catch her breath before our approach threatened danger. She was very cautious and very shy. A score of times it seemed as though we were going to win, and Anderson, the gunner, had actually taken the cannon trigger in hand—yet only to release it again, as the monster's tail, which measured eighteen feet

four inches across, uprose and left nothing save a fifteen-foot circular pool of squirming but unruffled water with a white ripple around its edge.

"Two astern!" shouted the lookout from the crow's nest.

Glancing in that direction, we saw two humpback whales about a hundred yards in our wake. They appeared to be a happy couple and were playfully racing through the water with the beautiful undulating motion that is common to their kind. They were going almost neck and neck and seemed to be rubbing sides as with sudden lurches they would nearly free themselves from the sea.

Humpback whales remind one of frolicking children or larking dogs, for they have a way of playing—much as sea lions have—as though seeking the spectator's admiration. And they were doing it now.

"Will we tackle 'em?" questioned the captain.

"Maybe we'd better, for this squall'll spoil our chances of sulphur bottom to-day," replied Anderson.

Off our starboard bow a great, black cloud was sweeping past. It would have been a thunder cloud anywhere except along the British Columbia coast, where thunder storms are unknown. Rain had already begun to fall. Here and there light still glimmered on the water and, as though in defiance of the blackness of the approaching storm, the sun threw a flood of rays upon a distant bank of clouds with an effect as beautiful as dramatic.

But just as we had lost hope of securing the great sulphur bottom, and before the skipper had had time to signal for full speed, the unexpected happened. It

came in the way of a loud, ominous blowing sound—like the exhaust of a powerful engine—immediately off our starboard bow. Startled, we wheeled about and beheld a volume of spray spouting twenty-five feet into the air and, through the waves, the head of the huge blue whale was breaking. Instantly, Anderson sprang upon the platform, swung the gun about, took aim and fired. When the smoke cleared we saw no sign of the brute save a faint cloud of rapidly dissolving vapor floating about the dark, oily-like, squirming pool of unruffled water that always marks the spot where a whale has sounded.

The gun had hurled the one-hundred-and-fifty-pound iron with such velocity that, though it had dragged behind it an uncoiling six-inch cable, the eye had failed to catch even a flash of the harpoon's flight. Anderson had fired at twenty fathoms and his aim had proved true, for now we not only saw the huge, snake-like line gliding swiftly along the deck and over the bow where it disappeared with a hiss into the sea, but we heard the steam winch begin to whine and then to shriek as the cable unwound itself with increasing speed from the rattling drum.

Some of the men, bearing down upon a lever with all their weight, endeavored to check the speed of the fast-vanishing cable; while the screaming winch, already overheated, hissed and spat furiously as others threw pails of water upon it to cool it down. The captain, observing that five hundred fathoms of line had already passed into the sea, bellowed to the men below to make ready with another line. Presently, however, the line began to slacken and, far ahead, we saw the

whale blow as she broke water. Not even waiting to rest, she set off straight to windward and, without a single pause, plowing the sea for a distance of more than four miles as she towed our niney-six-foot steel steamer at the rate of twelve knots an hour. Then, slightly slackening speed, as though to catch her breath, she allowed our fifty-horse-power steam winch to grunt and groan in an almost vain endeavor to regain some of the line, and thus bring us nearer our monstrous prey.

"That bomb didn't explode. Give 'er another harpoon!" shouted the captain as his eye traveled anxiously from the blowing whale to the whining winch.

"What bomb?" I queried.

"The bomb in the point of the harpoon we fired into her. It was set to explode a second and a half after the discharge of the gun. That allows time for the harpoon to bury itself in the whale."

We managed to reel in about a hundred fathoms of line before she again took fright; this time, however, she went off at a greater pace and, though the propeller, controlled by a six-hundred-horse-power engine, was now continually backing full speed astern, the whale towed us ahead for more than an hour and a half at the rate of seven and a half knots an hour.

For one who has not been whaling it must be hard to conceive that there are still living upon this globe animals so gigantic that a single beast will weigh more than the combined weight of one hundred and fifty horses, and so powerful that one can haul a steamer as fast as a man can run though a six-hundred-horse-power engine is working in opposition.

When the captive again slackened speed, the winch managed to reel in enough cable to bring her within range, and another bomb-harpoon was shot into her. This time, however, the bomb exploded, yet it failed to kill. Again she raced to windward and, after a run of half an hour, swam around in a circle, thus causing our ship to spin and flounder like a child's top that was nearly outspun. When exhaustion began to overtake her, the winch drew her a little closer and a "bomb-lance" was fired into her, but it did not explode. After another short run, the winch was once more employed in an effort to haul the whale near enough to the steamer to allow the men to use hand-lances; but the attempt failed.

Then a second bomb-lance was discharged. It struck true and exploded, but failed to kill. She, however, soon grew so weak that the winch, after a terrific tug, was able to haul her beside the bow of the vessel, where she lay breathing heavily and spouting her vaporous breath over us, while the captain and the gunner drove twenty-six-foot hand-lances into her and ended her suffering. The crew then hacked off the flukes and, with the aid of a heavy chain, hauled up the tail and made it fast to the bow. Meanwhile a lance-pointed tube, perforated for about a third of its length and connected by rubber hose with a powerful air-pump, was thrust into the belly and held there until the carcass was sufficiently blown up to keep it afloat.

The *St. Lawrence* was then headed for Kyuquot, the most westerly whaling station on Vancouver Island, where we arrived with our prize about three

o'clock next morning. The crew were feeling happy, for each man was to share in a bonus given by the company for every whale secured. The gunner's share was $5.50 for a hump-back, $10.50 for a fin-back, $13 for a blue whale, $30 for a sperm, and $50 for a right whale.

When we turned out at seven next morning to witness the cutting up of the whales (for the whaler *White* had brought in two during the night and there were two others at the floats) we found seven white men, nineteen Chinamen, twenty-eight Siwash Indians, and forty-three Japanese—ninety-seven in all—hard at work cutting up the five blue whales that represented seven hundred thousand pounds of flesh and bone—nearly equaling the combined weight of five thousand men.

Mr. Garcin, the manager of the station, directed the work. A great chain attached to a winch's steel cable was fastened about the tail of our eighty-two footer and the carcass was drawn slowly to the "fat-slip" while water from a hose played upon the planks to lessen the friction. Even while the great body was being drawn from the water the "flensers"—mostly Japanese—had begun their work. Climbing upon the huge carcass they began lining it from end to end with their flensing knives—eighteen-inch curved blades upon six-foot handles. Then a cable from a winch was hooked into the blubber at the head and a strip of from two to four feet wide and the length of the body was ripped off. The thickness of the blubber—the fat next the skin—varied from one to six inches. As the great ribbons of blubber moved up the slip, they were

washed with water from a hose, then cut into pieces about a foot square and tossed into the chopping machine from which endless elevators carried the minced fat to the rendering tanks in the upper story of the oil factory. Next the carcass was split open and the offal removed. Nine men found it an arduous job to dump the eighty-two footer's fin into a tank.

No wonder it required a fifty-horse-power steam winch to do the work, when one realizes that the liver covered an area of about twelve feet across, and that a barrel with a three-foot diameter looked as though it could not contain the heart, the main artery of which was as big around as a man's waist. The body was then hauled upon the "carcass slip" where still further dissecting took place until all flesh had been cast into one set of tanks, and all the bones had been sawed up and dumped into another set of tanks.

The men reminded one of nothing so much as a swarm of maggots as they crawled up and down the great carcass, sometimes outside, sometimes inside; here wading waist deep in gore, there—when a foot slipped—falling headlong into the awful mess. Occasionally, a flenser's knife went wide of its mark and punctured something that should not have been disturbed, then the flenser was drenched from head to foot with a stream of disgusting matter, shot at him with almost the force of a stream from a fire hose. So accustomed were the men to their work that when such an accident happened they merely stopped long enough to rub their eyes clear. So enormous were the entrails that they reminded one of a huge heap of hot-air pipes belonging to some great furnace. So plenti-

ful was the flow of blood that it actually ran away in noisy brooks of gore. In mere color the scene afforded a wonderful sight, for even the water in the harbor was red with blood.

The blubber was boiled in steam tanks until thoroughly cooked—then allowed to settle and cool. Next day the oil was run through pipes into cooling tanks, after which it was pumped into the filler press and forced through layers of canvas to remove all the stearine or sediment, leaving the oil as clear as water. Then it was barreled and marked "No. 1 Whale Oil." Stearine, which looks like lard, and is of about the same consistency, is valuable for the manufacturing of candles and soaps.

The flesh, offal, and bones were boiled in water and the oil skimmed off. The flesh, after being cooked, went to the meat press where the remaining water and oil were removed and the meat conveyed to the dryer, then screened and blown into sacks to be sold as fertilizer.

The bones were taken to the bone chopper—something like a stone crusher—smashed up, dried, pounded fine in the bone mill, and blown into sacks to be also sold as fertilizer. The fertilizer derived from both meat and bone is called "guano." The Kyuquot whaling station has a record of rendering eight hundred barrels of oil in one week, and the whaler *St. Lawrence,* in one day, killed and towed into Kyuquot no less than seven humpback and two blue whales.

"In all my experience at both the Atlantic and Pacific stations," remarked Manager Garcin, one evening when he and Captain Searle and Captain Farling

—both whalers from boyhood—were discussing whales, "I have never seen or heard of a sperm cow or calf being captured. All the sperms brought into the Newfoundland and British Columbia stations have been bulls of from forty to sixty feet in length."

"What do sperms eat?"

"Sharks, octopus, cod, and other small fish," replied Garcin. "Other whales feed upon nothing but small bait such as shrimps. A large sperm whale has a throat big enough to swallow a barrel four feet in diameter. Once I saw an uncrushed shark ten feet long, taken from the belly of a sperm."

"That reminds me," exclaimed Captain Earling, "that I once killed a sperm that contained a nine-foot shark, and inside the shark we found a codfish and inside the cod we found a cod hook."

"Of all the other kinds of whales that I have seen cut up—and I've seen thousands of them," went on Garcin—"I have only once found a herring in a whale."

"How about the size of whales?"

"The largest whale I've ever seen," answered Captain Earling, "was a sulphur bottom, and it measured ninety-three feet."

"The blue whale," continued Garcin, "is the largest creature alive to-day and also—as far as we have any record—the largest animal that ever lived upon this globe, as it even outranks in size the great Dinosaur of ancient days. Blue whales run from seventy to ninety, and have even been known to reach one hundred and ten feet in length. They average about fifty barrels of oil. Sperm whales measure from forty to

sixty feet and average eighty barrels of oil, twenty-five of which is spermaceti, a clear oil found in the head. Fin-backs go about seventy feet and average forty barrels of oil. California gray run about forty feet and supply about thirty-five barrels of oil. Humpbacks go from thirty to forty feet in length, and average twenty-five barrels of oil. The right whale has never been captured off the British Columbia coast. It is hunted in the Arctic and is the only whale that supplies 'whalebone.' The bone is taken from the mouth and runs from eight to fifteen feet in length."

"Which is the fastest swimmer?"

"The fin-back," answered Earling. "It is the greyhound of the ocean."

"Great Scott, how they can dive!" ejaculated Searle. "The greatest dive I ever saw was made by a fin-back when it sounded, going almost straight down for more than four hundred fathoms."

"Four hundred fathoms! How do you arrive at that?"

"Easy enough. When we had let out more than four hundred fathoms of line the whale was still going down and continued to pull on the cable with such force that the harpoon gave way."

"The longest time I ever saw a whale sound," remarked Earling, "was forty minutes. It was a sperm."

"I'll go you one better than that," laughed Searle. "I once hooked a sulphur bottom that towed my steamer, straight away, without a single break, for more than fourteen knots."

"That's not bad, but I've had better sport than that," said Earling with a chuckle. "Once while I was

hunting a fin-back, the lookout sighted a small humpback about thirty feet long. It was in a very playful mood. I saw it leap three times clean into the air, and it was within range. Shouting to my mate, I said with a laugh: 'Head her for the leaping humpback, and if it jumps again I'll shoot it on the wing.' As luck would would have it, the humpback took another leap, going even higher than before. I fired. The harpoon struck fair and killed it almost instantly. It jumped exactly like a salmon, nearly straight up, with both fins out like wings, and the tail fully ten feet clear of the water. As usual there was scarcely any commotion on the water where the whale had left the sea, but each time the whale fell on its side it made a terrific splash."

"Yes, I remember hearing of it," commented Searle, "but sometimes a leaping whale gives one a little more sport than one desires. The other day I harpooned a cow finner and, as the bomb failed to explode, the old girl started in to cut up didoes. She dived—Lord, how she dived! She took down several hundred fathoms of line, then, coming up with a mighty rush, she shot her seventy tons of bulk straight up into the air, fell over on her side and made a splash that was almost unbelievable. She continued to cut up capers for perhaps half an hour, and once she came up so close to our vessel that when she fell the spray drenched the deck. If she had fallen on our steamer it would have been broken in two.

"And one doughty old whale towed a great Indian war canoe for nine days before the nearly exhausted natives could kill it."

"So whaling is dangerous for the whalers as well as the whale?" I asked.

They assured me that it was. Whales do not charge —rather, many gunners and whaling captains say that they do not—but sometimes they bump vessels.

"Once my ship fired a harpoon into a sperm at short range—six fathoms," related Captain Earling. "Immediately the whale sounded. It rose and struck the ship's bottom with a tremendous thump. The dents are still there. And I know of two whaling steamers that were sunk by whales."

"I lost my own that way, two years ago, off the coast of Iceland," corroborated Captain Larsen. "A fin-back darted straight up and punched a hole through her bottom. Right through the steel plates. The ship sank so swiftly that we barely had time to launch the lifeboats.

"But whaling men are used to it. It's part of the game."

SHADOW OF PEARLS

BY KENNETH PAYSON KEMPTON

STEAMING west that trip, the *Fu-Chan* gore queer cargo. All her manifest mentioned was so many tons of silk and rubber and tobacco, loaded in Calcutta and consigned to worthy persons in the States. But her manifest lied.

Del Jason was worried about it. And when the *Fu-Chan's* young radio operator was worried, you could be sure something was up.

Serene, slim, eager—that was Del. Something of a dreamer, much of a doer—and one of the best little puzzlers afloat if anything went wrong. An insatiable curiosity rode him, spurred him into action even while spooky shivers trickled down his spine. . . .

This thing had paralyzed the others. Paralyzed Captain Ed Bond into disregard of his plain duty. Numbed Second Mate Renny into a stupor; struck Mr. Oulton dumb. But it wasn't going to paralyze him.

Frowning thoughtfully, he went off to consult a friend.

Now the *Fu-Chan's* galley lay directly below the captain's pantry, which itself adjoined the officers' mess room and the shack. Del reached it by his customary short cut, the pantry elevator.

A tight fit. For a grown man the little sliding box

would have been impossible. By crouching, squeezing his head between his knees and groping for the rope between his ankles, Del could just make it.

A creaking descent through sooty blackness, and the car had reached the shaft bottom. But on the point of wriggling out onto a locker Del paused, surprised.

At one end of the empty galley, the door to the cook's room stood ajar. And behind that steel panel he was positive he heard the cook's voice, talking to someone in a low, intense tone.

Del was no eavesdropper. Recovering quickly, he scrambled out calling, "Hi, there! Got company?"

The cook emerged instantly, shaking his head with a smile as he shut the door behind him. "Comp'ny! Hah! Set down, kid. How's your liver?"

"Haow's yer liver-r?" echoed the pebbly voice of a big red parrot, until now perfectly motionless on his perch in the corner. "Har! Har!"

Del jumped, then grinned—he never could get used to the abruptness of that bird. "Good," he conceded, taking a stool his host offered. "But I want some advice."

This cook, Lutz by name, was worth remark. With the *Fu-Chan* for but two or three trips, already he seemed to have belonged always aboard. A short, thick man with a bland face. His voice was soft; his skin was dead white from indoor work and much dishwater; he had twinkling green eyes and an ever-ready smile.

Lutz had a way with him. He'd been everywhere. Showed a great fondness for pets. Out of Port Said last hitch he'd exported (unknown to all but Del) a

vicious little green asp on which he simply doted. Named it Pat—short for Cleopatra. Taught it to follow him round. . . . But one day while he was busy over dinner, the cherished reptile slipped out of his pocket and was boiled to a turn in a kettle of soup. Luckily got dished into Del's plate, not the skipper's. . . .

So now he had this parrot, carefully strapped to its perch but trained already to a marvelous repertory of tricks, from speech to eating with a spoon. Del often thought the man should have hired out to a circus. Ashore with him one day in Sumatra, he'd seen Lutz practically hypnotize a ring-tailed colobus—make him stand up, jump, laugh, fetch and carry with an accuracy that was inhuman. The brown natives, gasping, had gone prostrate. To certain tribes the monkey is sacred. Anyone who could command a god must be a deity himself.

Del was fascinated. He'd spent hours listening to the cook's tales of the jungle, and Congo cannibals, and Voodoo. But his fascination was spiced with the thrill of fear. He *had* sometimes felt that back of that glittering smile there was . . . something . . .

"Advice," Lutz said softly, " 's my middle name." He perched on a shelf dangling his carpet slippers from his toes.

Then Del told him everything as he had learned it in the mess room that day.

Aboard the *Fu-Chan* it was customary for the officer due to take the bridge at midnight to turn in, dressed, on the cushioned locker in the chart room until called.

The chart room was kept locked, for the crew this trip were coolies. Yet Mr. Oulton, upon coming down off the bridge at four that morning and unlocking the chart-room door to get his coat, which he had left there when going on duty, for the August night had been breathless—yet Mr. Oulton had searched high and low in vain for the garment.

But had discovered, bedded upright in the chart-room table, a knife.

A queer knife, Del said—with a slim flat blade and a haft of curiously chased white jade. Its position was queerer. Pinned on the table lay a chart, the last one the ship would use this trip, showing the New England coastline from Machias to Stamford. About midway stood Boston, her destination. And the point of that knife had pricked the very word. It reared up off the harbor entrance, a sinister blockade.

But the queerest thing about the weapon was that everybody recognized it. That knife belonged to a dead man.

At this statement the cook's eyes, which had been closed, came open with a jerk. Del didn't notice.

"Pooh!" the skipper had scoffed. "Some fool joke, Oulton," he growled.

"Joke," rasped the lanky mate, picking at his collar. For a man who'd lost only a coat, found only a savage trinket, he seemed strangely distraught. But Mr. Oulton was high-strung, moody, anyway. And everybody knew he was superstitious as an old maid. "Joke!" he wailed hoarsely. "Cap'n—you just come down for'd with me!"

The skipper had shrugged, "Oh, well," patiently, laid the knife down on the sideboard, and humored him by going along.

The forward well-deck was deserted: this was still before sunup. Through the haze of summer dawn the throb of the *Fu-Chan's* turbines sounded lonely and dismal. Captain and mate moved forward, two lumpy shadows, to the break of the forecastle head. Renny had watched from the bridge, Del himself through the airport in his shack.

Under the lee of her bluff bows lay what the skipper called his "sea-goin' morgue." Four somber coffins of polished teak were battened neatly thwartship, two on each side of the forecastle door. Inside them were friends of the crew. . . .

This bit of freight might have bothered some commanders. But not Ed Bond. He rubbed his hands and regarded his little funeral parlor with a certain pride. "That's because it got him out of a hole," Del explained. Lutz nodded sleepily.

You see the skipper had been up against it in Calcutta. Cholera had removed his deck force bodily to the hospital. Labor conditions being chaotic, he'd grimly considered working her home unmanned. India had saved him that annoyance. Four families of low-caste tribesmen from the hills beyond Bhutan had migrated coastward to attend the obsequies of four kinsmen gassed in a copper mine near Balasore. The Calcutta agent had given him the tip. An interpreter and a show of silver dollars worked magic on that dolorous throng; they shuffled placidly aboard. The bos'n had four quartermasters out of the lot in no

time. The rest could at least heave on lines and scrape paint-work. They would serve until he could get back to pick up his convalescents.

And if their pagan creed demanded that they bring their embalmed dead along, and daily open the four caskets for strange rites of incense-burning and guttural, hooted chants—why, where was the harm?

Well, in that eerie dawn, Mr. Oulton had stopped by the forward coffin, port side. "This is the one," he announced accusingly, glaring.

The skipper grunted. From the bridge during those daily ceremonies, both had seen the knife clasped stiffly in the yellow, claw-like fingers reposing on the corpse's breast in there. An ancient custom. Protection against dragons of darkness through which the soul must pass before joining his fathers.

Under the mate's shaking hand the lid rose without a squeak.

A still figure, revealed to the waist line, bulked shadowy in the wan light. On the mandarin coat that flowed in loose folds from the scrawny neck the hands were crossed, empty. The dusky face was impassive as a mountain. But one of those slanting eyelids, betraying the clumsy embalmer, had slipped up a crack. A slit of pale eye was exposed, giving that dead man an unspeakable look of stealthy, fiendish life. . . .

"A joke . . ." the skipper mumbled, but dubiously.

The mate was hissing in his ear. "D'you know what their fool pow-wows are *for?* Tryin' to bring him back to life, that's what! And by the saints I think they've——"

"Bah!" That was too much. "Not these days, Oul-

ton. Feel him . . . see? Cold as stone. Come on back before they catch us meddling. Somebody playing kid tricks on you, Oulton—that's all."

They went back to the mess room. The skipper strode in and pulled out his chair. "Ha! Breakfast. . . . Come on, Oulton. Let the dead——" He stopped. The mate was standing rooted at the threshold, staring in agonized panic at the sideboard.

Telling of it, Del's voice sank to a whisper. "They hadn't been out of that room five minutes. But the knife was gone!"

The cook's puffy eyelids never flickered. After a disappointed pause Del went on:

"Course, the Old Man asked questions. Nobody but him and the mate had been in the mess room. Nobody had seen the darn knife."

Then the skipper had tried to laugh it off. "The flyin' pig-sticker," he chuckled, "or the double-dyed mystery of the knife that wasn't——" But his face sobered. "Lordy," the big man whispered, "what numbskulls we were not to take it down with us! If it don't turn up before they hold their bleedin' services, there'll be black doings aboard."

For Ed Bond knew something of the raging fires hidden under Oriental piety. "If that crowd of heathen go on the rampage," he'd put in, "the odds'll be about four to one—not countin' their dead mates either."

Of course, Del continued, the thunder squall that had hit the *Fu-Chan* just before dinner time postponed the danger for twenty-four hours at least. You couldn't hold funerals in that downpour and gale. But that afternoon, when the weather had cleared and the watch

below came out on deck for an airing, it had seemed to him that they acted strangely. Huddling round in little solemn groups, whispering, their sleek pig-tailed heads jerking up and down. . . . "And I know why," Del added.

The skipper and Mr. Oulton *had* been numbskulls. They'd gone down forward to have a look, in plain view of the coolie quartermaster on watch at the wheel! Of course, the man had told his mates. They didn't know the knife was gone, yet—but when they did find out they'd know where to lay the blame.

"Hah!" barked Lutz abruptly.

"Har!" the parrot squawked.

Del was annoyed. "I don't see much to laugh about."

Then the cook interposed his gleaming smile. "My fault, kid. Just thinkin' of something. Go ahead."

Well, this was after what had happened at dinner.

That's why it worried him. At dinner Mr. Oulton announced that he'd found his coat. Hanging right on its hook in his room. "Likely been there all the time," the skipper had guyed him.

But the mate wasn't a bit cheered up by the discovery. It wasn't the coat that he cared about, the man insisted passionately; "it's the *principle* of the thing."

"Blow the principle!" Bond retorted bluntly. "If only we can find the knife now, and put it back before they——"

"And before he gets the words out of his mouth," Del was crying excitedly, "in comes Mr. Renny with the blooming thing in his hand!"

The *Fu-Chan's* second mate was a chunky little

man with pink cheeks, and he stuttered when disturbed. Holding that sliver of steel gingerly between thumb and finger, he sputtered. "C-can you b-b-beat ——"

"Wow!" the skipper shouted. "Come to poppa!" And he grabbed the knife and slipped it into his coat pocket. "Now tell us all about it," he ordered.

Renny told. He'd gone to his room to clean up for dinner. Over his washstand there was a picture of himself, clipped from a newspaper on the day he'd got his license, tacked to the casement. Standing there with his hands all lather, he happened to look up. And there was that knife s-stabbing the picture right in the mouth!

"Nobody said a word, at first," Del commented. "I looked at Mr. Oulton; he was licking his lips over and over. . . . The Old Man's eyes were kind of smoking. It had got him this time, all right."

Finally the skipper's growl had brought them out of their trance. "This joke is goin' stale. . . . Some lousy son of a dogfish is *bullyin'* us. He's tryin' to make Oulton believe he won't live to get home"—here the mate made a choking sound—"and he's threatenin' Renny with the same, if he talks. About what, now, Renny?" And Bond's eyes drove at the little man.

"Ab-bout my p-p-pearls . . ."

"Pearls!" barked the skipper.

"G-gone!" wailed Renny. "Clean——"

Before anyone could speak, a chair crashed, and Mr. Oulton was groping, with a ghastly face, for the door.

For some reason, after he'd left, the air of that room was clearer. Del had felt it and said so. Lutz nodded, but his eyes were still closed. Mr. Renny, Del went on, calmed down sort of and told his story.

You see, at Mergui he and Mr. Oulton had gone ashore. Talking about pearls, of course—everybody did, around there. But they'd separated, the mate bound for a little fishing hamlet on the outskirts while Renny took in the town. He'd found a shop there. Four large matched stones. Beauties. Mr. Renny had fallen for them. Blew in all his savings and lugged 'em back in triumph. Told no one, of course. Not a soul, he insisted.

He'd made a canvas bag for his treasure, stowed it away under the mattress in his room. And when he wheeled round from the knife sticking in his picture, there on the pillow lay the bag with its mouth open as if grinning up at him—plumb empty. "And you c-can say what you l-like," he had finished with a sort of pathetic defiance. "There's more in this than meets the b-b-bloody eye. If you ask m-me, it's that d-dead Chink who's——"

Wham! came the skipper's fist on the table. "Has all hands gone balmy?" he thundered. "Do you mean to sit there and tell me a dead man can walk around, and get through fourteen-inch airports, unseen? Bosh!" he said, getting up. "Bosh!" he grumbled on his way to the door. And *"Bosh!"* he exploded at the threshold, and cleared out.

Little Mr. Renny, Del said, sat slumped in his chair staring miserably at nothing. "G-go ahead, call me b-balmy," he grieved. "That don't f-fetch back my

p-pearls. And I b-bet I'm right! It is that Chink—s-somehow . . . ."

So Del finished. He sat studying his friend anxiously.

Lutz opened his eyes. "D'you want my opinion?" Del nodded. "There's a devil loose in a man's skin, on this packet. He wanted them pearls . . . ." The cook opened his white palms in a quick, significant gesture. "Phooey! Black magic."

"But——"

"No buts to it!"

Lutz never got excited, but his voice hardened. "We can't explain it. It's a set of tricks we don't know. Why, I knew Renny had them stones. He told me all about it, one night when I took his mug-up on to the bridge. I warned him then. . . . No use. It's magic, I tell you. Ought to know better. Now he'll never see 'em again. *And as for the mate*——"

The cook checked himself, and the smile fled off his face. But the next instant he was beaming again, and after finishing with some commonplace about Mr. Oulton launched into a yarn of a man with a diamond tooth.

Yet Del puzzled over that suddenly checked remark. Later, gliding up through the blackness of the shaft, he puzzled still more. For up out of the pit the parrot's cackle followed him: "And as for the mate—the mate—the mate——" Then a hissing, savage whisper: "Shut up, you!" instantly followed by the cook's tallowy voice calling, "So long, kid. Good-night." And that bird again, irrepressible: "Good-*night!*"

He went to his bunk in the shack, lay down and

tried to sleep. But his mind ran on, battling with enigmas. Was there—could there be such a thing as——? And why did Mr. Oulton act so funny? Who had Lutz been talking to in his room down there? Didn't sound like a man talking to himself. More the sort of tone you'd use speaking to a child. . . . And why in the name of thunder should he break off like that, about the mate? Oh . . . rats!

So his old friend—or enemy—curiosity gnawed him. And at length he flung out of the berth and went on deck. It was a fine night, thick with stars, but on the water very dark and still. From the bridge came down the tinkle of four bells. Two o'clock . . .

By that time Del's mind was made up. This thing had started up forward there, by those coffins. He was going up there to watch, to find out—if it killed him.

But on the way two trifles caught and shook his resolution. Trifles.

Nearing the ladder he had to pass Mr. Oulton's room. The port was lighted, uncurtained. Before he realized, he had looked in. The mate was there, sitting on his bed-place under the drop light. Across his legs lay his coat, lining up. Del saw something like a cartridge belt sewed right round the waistline of the garment. Mr. Oulton was hunched over it. With trembling fingers he was pressing each little pocket of the belt in turn. And at each probing the man drew in his breath sharply. . . . That was the first trifle.

As Del came out from the lee of the superstructure and put hand to the ladder rail, on the bridge directly above him he heard the skipper's voice. But it was Mr. Renny's watch. Del could picture those two, close to-

gether like conspirators at the end of the bridge, as far as possible from the Chinaman motionless at her wheel. The captain's words carried down out of darkness, furtive yet hoarse with some new development: "Right out of my pocket, I tell you! You saw me put it there, in the mess room at dinner . . . you saw me, Renny?" And that was the second trifle.

The night was very still. The sky lay over the sea like the shadow of enormous wings. The silence, quivering, seemed a hostile ruse of the powers of darkness —and the last moment before some terrific ambush.

Del Jason called himself seven kinds of a jackass. Devoutly he wished he were back in bed. What possible earthly use——? But the Thing, whatever it was, lay down there. He could hide up somewhere, see without being seen. He *must* see, find out . . .

Down the ladder he crept, very softly. Over to her starboard bulwark, along it forward, step by slinking step. Past the hatch, the butt of the foremast, the ghostly bulk of the donkey engine shrouded in tarpaulins. Till finally the wall of the head loomed over him, and he kicked hollow wood . . . and that dim light he had followed proved to be a watch lamp fixed on the inside of the forecastle bulkhead and shining diagonally through a port to the deck.

There were the caskets, four dismal shadows. The space between their inboard ends made an aisle leading to the forecastle door, now of course shut. The port was just left of the door. Its shaft of light cut across the head of the forward casket on that side, but without touching it, and lay in the aisle like a pool of gold.

To see, unseen. . . . His pulses thumping, Del wriggled into the narrow black alley between the sides of the starboard coffins. He lay flat, head to the aisle and pillowed on his arms. He could see nothing but that spot of light. Yet, if anything happened around the lid of that forward port casket, he would see it —or its shadow.

As he lay there, doubt assailed him again. The light had lost its pregnant air, gone flat and dead. He heard the skipper leave the bridge with a troubled mutter; heard the second mate close the door of the wheelhouse, used for steering only in winter, as he went in for his coffee. He felt himself strangely shut off, alone—in the company of four dead Chinamen and a live one up there at the wheel. Five bells jangled. Then silence shut down, vast, inscrutable . . .

Slowly Del Jason's eyelids drooped, his body relaxed. Once or twice he brought up with a little jerk: then had the delicious sense of swimming off again. It didn't matter. . . . A jumble of absurdities capered across the screen of his brain. The skipper ferociously eating—yes, eating pearls. . . . Snakes . . . parrots . . . the cook doing tricks . . . a voice rustling like silk. . . . Skipper—Lutz—Oulton—Renny——

Wake up—something warned him—*wake*——

There had been no sound. Del's eyes flickered open, focused—then widened with stark loathing. Framed in the shimmering puddle of light before him lay a shape that made his skin crawl.

It hung there, unsupported—the head and hunched shoulders of a little old man with a round, broad forehead, a flat nose, and a queue. One lean arm was

raised against the slanting, shadowed lid of the coffin, holding it up. The other reached downward, groping in there, bent on some monstrous purpose . . .

But at that instant the silence was stabbed by a cry —a long scream of terror and despair. It came from the bridge. It rose, rode the blackness, and died on a long bubbling groan.

A door banged . . . Vague stirring on the bridge. Down forward the lid slammed, the oval on the deck lay clear. But Del neither saw nor heard. His nerves were as good as the next man's. All the same, at that cry he had fainted.

Next morning, of course, he told himself that it was all a dream. He'd gone forward on a fool's errand, fallen asleep, and waked up just about in time to get back to his shack before the dawn revealed him where he had no business to be, he reflected. Everything was all right. At breakfast there had been nothing unusual. Somebody said something about a coolie helmsman letting out a screech over nothing. . . . That was all.

True, the mystery wasn't cleared up. Probably it never would be. The *Fu-Chan* was nearing port. Like other mysteries this one would simply be forgotten in the press of duties.

He started whistling to keep himself awake. Then he stopped abruptly, his mouth a round hole with no tune coming through.

Where was the knife? His gray eyes slid sideways. Forgotten?

Out on deck there was a slurring, shuffling noise.

Del whirled about toward the airport. Before he

reached it, two things happened. Somebody shot past the open shack door—a thick, white-clad figure with a brown bundle hugged in its arms. And down from the bridge just overhead came the skipper's gritty roar: *"You yellow devils, you——!"*

Gasping, Del put his head out. The color ebbed out of his face; he froze there, stunned.

Down along the well-deck was sweeping a solid wave of men—stony faces, whipping coats, flailing arms and spurning feet—all in swift, deadly silence. Out of the forecastle door they poured, past the forward port casket with its lid again raised; along the gray steel they raced, and milled to the bridge ladder and engulfed it. . . . Up they struggled. Not a sound but their sliding feet, their rustling bodies, their hot quick breath. And then——

"Look!" The word, bellowed down from the bridge, stopped them as with the impact of a blow. Parchment faces turned upward gaping. The whole crowd hung motionless. Then through the mass stirred a strange hissing sigh. . . .

"He's—got—it!" Again the skipper bawled. Down below, a little yellow man commenced whimpering shrilly.

Del leaned out, craned his neck. He caught sight of Bond's pointing arm, he traced the line of it upward —far up to the aërial, his aërial stretched like gossamer from truck to truck against the pale sky.

And he cried out, too, then, as the truth sank home. Up there, a smallish brown body was working its way swiftly forward. It was a monkey—a brown monkey with a white face and a long curved tail. The

sunlight glinted on a sliver of metal in its mouth. . . . It reached the fore-top and slid expertly down the spar, caught at a bobstay and thence hopped to the deck. Awkwardly it loped straight for the open coffin and perched on its edge. There it sat, with one arm raised to the lid and its tail arched till it touched the back of its head, and looked oddly like a queue. With the other hand it took the knife out of its mouth and laid it down inside; then groped about the interior . . . seemed to be eating something . . . turned this way and showed its teeth in a grin . . .

The shocked silence in the ship's waist was broken by the swish of cloth, the slapping of bare palms. Del looked down. The bridge ladder was empty. Every coolie in the lot had gone flat on his face—arms extended, bony heels bare. And off the mat of human bodies welled up a hoarse murmur, a sing-song chant rising and dying in weird cadence—of praise or prayer, who could tell? The posture was enough. These souls had seen a miracle from heaven. As the monkey with bulging cheeks now began his return, they rose quietly, their faces flat and passive, and in two long lines slunk back toward the forecastle door. As each passed the open casket, he made low obeisance; and the last man closed the lid, raised his arms high like a priest, and slid past the threshold. The door swung to with a clang.

Meanwhile the monkey had reached the masthead. As it swung out on the aërial again, Del acted. Reaching behind him, with his right hand he found the dynamo switch on the bulkhead. He snapped it shut. Then his fingers fell upon the key.

There was a long sharp whine. The brown lump on the wire jerked spasmodically. (Poor little cuss! *He* had not done anything, except carry out orders. But he had to pay. Lives and cargo hung in the balance.) Then the ape's bulging mouth fell open in a strangely human grimace of pain. Something like a shower of white raindrops caught the sun as they spread out of it, came pelting down in a thin rattle on the deck. And the beast itself stiffened, lost hold—dropped like a plummet and went whirling over the bulwark into the sea.

Instantly Del heard a scuffle on the bridge overhead. He jumped back, tore outside, raced up the ladder; at its head found the two mates of the *Fu-Chan* engaged in undignified struggle to descend.

"Cap'n!" Del blurted—"Cap'n, I——"

"Wait!" Bond took three steps, every muscle a command. "I've had enough of this. Mr. Oulton—Renny! Break away there! Shame on you! We'll get to the bottom of this mess once and for all. Mr. Renny, go down and pick up those—pebbles. Bring 'em up to the chart room. Mr. Oulton, take the deck. And you"—he gripped Del's arm fiercely—"if you've got anything to say, come with me."

They went down, leaving Oulton with a face like a thunderhead. In the chart room Bond flung his cap on the table and turned to the boy. "Well, I got a hunch you're the only man in the know. Spill it."

For some minutes Del talked, while his captain listened with a face of stone. "One thing I've learned," the boy finished earnestly. "Smiles don't make a friend. . . . Why, the cook had taught that poor

monk to be a pickpocket, to get around this ship without being seen, up the elevator, in and out of ports—just like he taught that parrot to eat with a spoon. The cook wanted those pearls—Mr. Renny had told him about 'em. And he lay low like a sneak and fished for 'em by working on the mate's superstition, making that monk hide 'em in the dead Chink's clothes and using his knife as a threat. Crew didn't know a thing about it. All they wanted was their blooming sticker back. But the cook"—Del's eyes kindled angrily, his lip curled—"why, dang him, he had a great time with me! Playing me off, telling me it was black magic."

"Hold on! I see all that. But Renny had only four of the things. Where'd the rest come from?"

Del hesitated. He didn't exactly relish the rôle of talebearer. . . . "Well, sir, the way I figure it those other stones are—Mr. Oulton's. Only he didn't pay for his. Swiped 'em off the natives that night he and the others were ashore."

Mr. Renny's plump figure appeared in the doorway. He held both hands cupped before him. On his face was a dizzy grin. "They—they've h-h-hatched!" he sputtered, pop-eyed. "T-twenty-six of the b-blessed things, and I only had f-four——"

"*All* right, Renny. Bring 'em along." The skipper's voice was its placid growl again. "Dump 'em right here in my cap. Now pick out your four, or others just as good. Got 'em? Fine! Take 'em along out of my sight, Renny. Go up and relieve the mate. Tell him my compliments and will he kindly step down here a minute, and—er—bring the cook with him. Going to have a little post-mortem."

But when the door had closed on the second mate he fell sober again. Standing up abruptly, he marched to a port and swung it open. "This is a crime," he told Del sternly, "but it's nothing to what has been going on under my nose." Scooping a big hand into the cap, he let fly out the opening. "Never find those black devils that really owned 'em," he mumbled angrily. "Whole bleedin' archipelago'd claim the things. . . ." And he dipped, feeling into the corners for stray pearls, till the cap shook out empty, and he set it on his grizzled head.

With a wry smile he dusted off his hands. Then the right, hard and brown as saddle leather, shot out toward Del. Captain Ed Bond's seamed face lighted.

"Two fellers aboard didn't believe in spooks, anyhow," he boomed contentedly. "Get back to your spark, son."

THE ASUANG

BY PHILIP KIRBY

HARRIS EWING McKELLER gazed over the battered taffrail of the *Hannah B.* at the oily brown waters of the China Sea and thought that he had never seen anything so repulsive. It was the morning of the fourth day of calm and the waves, rising and falling in endless rhythm, seemed to mock all efforts to go either forward or back. The little sixty-ton schooner rocked and swayed and the continuous clickety clack of the main sheet rattling in the after blocks played a fitting obbligato to the weird crooning of the forward watch, all Filipino and stripped to the waist, who were importuning the sea god for a breath of air to send them on their way to Manila.

Harris Ewing, called "The Ewe Lamb" by his friends in the third year of the Cathedral School in Baguio, felt dismal, for several reasons. First, he was returning to school after a jolly holiday spent in hunting pheasants and snipe up the Pearl River; secondly, he had quarreled outrageously with his friend, Barney McTague, the night previous over the possession of a grinning Chinese idol, presented to them both by the Tuchun of Tiger Island; thirdly, he had eaten too much salt pork. For the last he had paid tribute to

Father Neptune all night long, and as a result now had that sickly green pallor of convalescence, and spoke bitterly about the coasting packet on which he and Barney had been compelled to take passage, in order to get back to the Philippines in time for the opening of school.

He turned from the rail and gazed forlornly at the littered decks. The overpowering smell of cooking assailed his nostrils and caused him to rush to the rail again. In his agony he did not heed the thumps across his shoulder blades until a final stinging slap nipped his consciousness. He turned to find Barney.

"A whallop in time saves—part of a dinner—maybe," said Barney, laughing.

"Go on away. Can't you see I'm sick?"

"Look here, Ewe," Barney spoke quietly, earnestly. "Don't be a nut! I've come with the olive branch," and opening his clenched fist he exhibited several crumpled bay leaves. "It was the best I could get, there being no olive trees handy. Chew some and you'll feel better."

Obediently Harris Ewing munched several of the fragrant leaves, but faced his companion with a look of belligerence.

"Come off your high horse," Barney continued. "I'm willing to shake hands if you are—and—and forget the rumpus last night. This rotten calm gets on a fellow's nerves, and I'm willing to admit I was a bit hasty. Here, shake." They shook hands solemnly and a wan smile played across Ewing's face.

"Barney, you're a brick," he declared. "I'm—I'm sorry I was a beast, and I beg your pardon. Now

don't make me eat any more humble pie. It probably wouldn't stay *down,* anyway; nothing will."

And just then came Yung Chang, the Number One cook and cabin boy, bearing two steaming bowls of green tea and his queer smile—crooked lips framing, at one side, a misshapen, protruding tooth—a smile the boys could never understand.

"Master dlink hot tea, chop-chop. Him, velly good. Wring sick devil neck inside tum-tum. Make Master well *ausa.* Velly soon wind god blow, then ev'body, ev'ting *Ding Hau!*"

"No can do, Yung," replied The Ewe, lapsing naturally into pidgin English, the colloquial jargon of China's treaty ports. The smile went from Yung's wrinkled parchment face, but he handed one of his tea bowls to Barney who sipped the acrid liquid with the *sang froid* of an "old China Hand."

"Come on, Ewe, might as well take your medicine gracefully," said Barney. "If you don't drink it, Yung will think you want to make bad joss, and then the wind god will never blow."

Yung brought back his smile—Barney once said it always made him think of one of the terrible ancient devil masks—and again proffered the steaming bowl to the suffering Ewe.

"Yes, Master, help make good joss; you drink, wind god blow bimeby, everybody plenty happy."

Ewing took the cup and swallowed three gulps valiantly and then coughed violently.

"Sick devil him strangle!" Yung rejoiced in the other's misery which he believed was the excoriation of the devils of sickness. The exertion brought a rush

of color to Ewing's cheeks and Barney thumped him on the back.

"Get me some water, quick. I'll choke—choke to death," the boy gasped between paroxysms of coughing.

Instead of obeying Yung stood blandly by. "Velly solly, no can do, no have got boiled water. Other water make white Master more sick—make sometimes Macao sick, too," he added, passing the clawlike talons of his right hand, in a speculative gesture, over his own middle portions. A curious look of agony appeared in his shrunken yellow eyes. Both boys started involuntarily.

"What's this, Yung?" shouted Barney. "You drink other water, you catch cholera maybe?"

"Have dlink littee water, littee hour ago, no feel so good. No catch cholera," he added, shuffling off.

Ewing finished his tea and said he felt better. The boys walked aft, The Ewe leaning heavily on Barney's arm, and met the Captain as he emerged from the little wheelhouse with a bundle of charts under his arm.

"Good-morning, Captain Ransom," said Barney. "How are we heading?"

The Captain looked at the cloudless sky, then at the far horizon where the highlands of the Batanes Islands were barely visible above the smooth, monotonous swell.

"Heading for Mariveles," he replied; then—"and drifting about two miles an hour in that general direction," he added with a sorry laugh. The continued calm which had begun shortly after the *Hannah B.* had left Hongkong, four days earlier, *was* trying on

one's nerves. Tired lines appeared in diminutive crow's feet under the old skipper's eyes and his jovial manner was quite gone. He and his ship were at the whim of the whimsical elements; nothing, he knew, could be done to help matters. His dejection showed in his stride as the boys watched him walk away. Strolling forward, they idled away some time noting the tender care with which members of the crew preened their roosters for the champion cock fights which would take place in Manila—when they got there. Mr. Brown, the Mate, joined them.

"At this rate, sir, how long will it take to make Manila?" Barney asked.

"You never know your luck in the China Sea," the Mate answered. "I've been sailing up and down this coast for twenty years and have never been able to guess the weather rightly—nor some other things, either." A shiver seemed to pass over his gaunt frame despite the increasing heat and humidity. Beads of perspiration dripped from wisps of curly hair showing beneath his sun helmet. "There's something I don't like about this weather—something in the air—I don't know."

Both boys exchanged apprehensive glances; they were never sure whether they should take seriously the "superstitions" of sailormen or not. They saw the mate open his mouth to add some further observation, then close it suddenly, setting his lips in a hard, straight line. And they saw a look come into his eyes as queer and fearsome as the low wail, sounding from amidship, which caused it.

The Mate whirled as if struck with a lash. Follow-

ing his gaze down the deck aft, the boys saw nothing out of the ordinary save that the crew had ceased their chatter and were standing motionless, listening. An interval, and then the wail was repeated, ending in a groan.

"I knew it—I felt it. 'Tis the banshee. In the old country the banshee comes before death," the Mate murmured, half to himself.

Captain Ransom had heard it, too, and was hurrying in the direction of the galley whence the sound had come. The Mate followed. So did the boys. A moment later the three peered in curiosity over the Captain's shoulder as he flung open the galley door.

The sight that met their gaze struck them dumb and motionless. It was the body of Yung Chang lying diagonally across the galley floor. His head was half supported on one of the low flour bins, his shrivelled body was bloated beyond belief, his face and arms were nearly black. And the same horrid smile distorted his mouth while convulsive shivers racked his body. Although his eyes were open they seemed to be fast losing their life luster, and the eyeballs slowly rolled up and up until the whites alone were visible.

"Get me a blanket quick, someone, and close this door."

Mr. Brown and Barney rushed aft to fetch the necessary covers, while Captain Ransom stripped off the cook's clothes.

"What's the matter, Captain? Can I help any?" asked Ewe, in a hushed voice.

"Keep away. It's black cholera, evidently. Maybe we can save this fellow—I don't know. Go to my

cabin and get the bottle of brandy and a small black box containing a hypodermic. They're both in the left side of the medicine chest. Here are the keys," he shouted after The Ewe's retreating figure and flung a bunch which The Ewe recovered as they rattled into the scuppers. He nearly collided with Mr. Brown and Barney who were rushing forward bearing armloads of blankets.

Barney and The Ewe never knew what went on behind the closed doors of the galley, but two hours later the Captain emerged, dripping with perspiration and in response to their mute questions shook his head sadly.

"He was too old—we were too late," he muttered. "Yung Chang, who has cooked for me for more than twelve years, has passed to his ancestors. Mr. Brown, place one of your men to guard the galley door and let no one approach beyond that stanchion. Heat some water—lots of it—on the crew's stove forward and make me a bath in one of the biggest water butts. Put plenty of sulphur and five tablespoonfuls of argyrol in it." And the boys shuddered as they thought of the need of the disinfectant.

The grim hand of death, having struck once, seemed to hover over the little craft. The men, as they worked, talked in undertones and awed whispers. Captain Ransom remained in his cabin nearly all afternoon and Mr. Brown reported that he slept fitfully, utterly exhausted from his strenuous efforts.

Just before sunset all hands were summoned aft. They assembled silently, understanding. In a firm clear voice Captain Ransom read the simple, age-old service for those who have died at sea. And Yung Chang's

earthly remains, neatly blanketed and weighted, slipped from beneath the folds of the Stars and Stripes and were committed to the deep.

"Poor old Yung," said The Ewe when the crew had dispersed. "It was only this morning that he wanted me to make good joss by drinking his tea. Let's hope he has found plenty of wind wherever he's gone. Maybe he'll ask his wind god to blow us along."

Soon the Captain called the quartermaster and spoke slowly, clearly: the Filipino must not misunderstand:

"Burn two canisters of sulphur in the galley. Pitch overboard all the bread and food that is not in tins. Order the men not to drink any water that isn't boiled half an hour. If any of the crew appears sick, report him to me immediately. Tell Felipe, the youngster that we shipped last month, that he is appointed temporary cook with full pay. Tell him to open some tins of sardines from the emergency rations and bring some of the pilot biscuits with them and scalding hot tea. We'll have supper on deck to-night. Altogether too hot in the cabin."

The quartermaster touched his forehead in salute and shuffled off.

The only sounds that broke the twilight stillness were the creaking of the mainsail gaff jaws against the mast, the clacking of the main-sheet blocks against their steel runners, and the ominous splash as some article of food was thrown overboard from the foul galley.

Already the stars were peeping forth in that vast canopy of blue above, and seemed to dissolve the last

bit of color in the afterglow, although scarcely half an hour had elapsed since the sun, blood-red, had slipped with an almost audible hiss into the brown sea. The brief tropic twilight was over, and night enshrouded twelve bits of human driftwood aboard the little, tossing craft, powerless to control her; still night, with an oppressive silence dimly broken by the irregular lapping of the waves and now and then the startling flapping of a baggy sail.

Supper was a quiet meal. Both The Ewe and Barney took their cues from the Captain and Mr. Brown, who spoke but rarely and then in clipped monosyllables. As soon as the meal was over, both officers lighted their pipes. For a long time they sat without speaking. Suddenly Barney lifted his eyes, first to the Captain, then to the Mate, and to Ewing; and on Ewing's face saw a reflection of the fear that was in his own heart. For from without came the sound of an uncanny crooning. Always in a minor key, it shifted from a moan to a chant, then rose to the heights of a discordant wail, then died almost completely away—only to begin again.

The Ewe felt cold and shivery. Barney wiped cold beads of perspiration from his forehead with the back of his hand. The Captain and Mate appeared unmoved and smoked in silence. Finally Barney suggested, to no one in particular: "Sounds like a funeral dirge."

"Sure, 'tis the crew holding a wake for poor Yung. They'll probably sing like that all night long—the saints preserve us. Many's the wake I've held in the old country. I remember the time——"

"Save your reminiscences until morning, Mr.

Brown," Captain Ransom's voice cut like a knife. His nerves plainly had been rasped by the excitement of the day and his anxiety.

"I'm sorry, sir," Mr. Brown answered. "I was just going to tell the young gentleman here that the Filipinos believe that by singing and clapping they'll drive away the evil spirits and help poor old Yung's journey to a celestial kitchen."

"But," The Ewe interjected, "I thought Filipinos were Christians."

"They are, all right, when it comes to holding fiestas and bailes on Church holidays," the Mate replied. "But down underneath, especially in those that go to sea, there's much of the pagan superstition left. Why, once when I was up in Pangasinan——"

"Mr. Brown!"—it was impossible to mistake the nettled, imperious tone in the Captain's voice—"go forward and order the men to stop that infernal song. I'm going to turn in. Please call me at midnight."

At the height of an eerie wail the chant stopped abruptly in compliance with the Mate's gruff order. Barney sneezed convulsively and The Ewe jumped from fright. Even the skipper, who had sauntered aft to speak to the quartermaster at the wheel, turned abruptly, and to hide his confusion blew his nose violently.

Barney and The Ewe went below and returned with their narrow net hammocks which they slung between the lifeboat davits near the stern, and tumbled into their swinging perches, exhausted. Barney closed his eyes, but Yung's leering smile confronted him the moment his eyelids fell so he tried to keep his eyes open

and watch the Southern Cross rise majestically from the far horizon. Eventually he dozed off into a troubled sleep.

The ship's clock in the cabin struck four bells, was repeated by the quartermaster, and a moment later was answered by the man on watch in the crow's nest.

"Two o'clock and all's well," murmured The Ewe sleepily, turning in his hammock.

"Aiyeeeah! Aiyeeeah! Asuang! Asuang!"

The hysterical screech of the man in the crow's nest ripped the dark stillness like a gleaming rapier.

A tremendous hubbub ensued forward as the crew tumbled out and raced aft terror stricken. The word *Asuang* was repeated from mouth to mouth. Who had seen the ghost? Where was it now? Anyone been killed? *Aiyeeeah! Asuang!* The hysteria of abject fear had touched them and rendered speech but gibbering fragments.

Barney and The Ewe slipped out of their hammocks and raced barefoot up to the quarterdeck to be met by the gleaming muzzles of two revolvers held steadily by the Captain and the Mate.

"Get behind us!" Captain Ransom spoke in level, even tones, never shifting his eyes. The boys obeyed mechanically.

"What is this, mutiny?" Captain Ransom ripped out his question in Tagalog. "What's all this about an *Asuang?* There's no such thing as an *Asuang*. Get forward immediately!"

Like whipped children they cowered before him, then slunk away in the darkness.

"Mr. Brown," the Captain spoke in an undertone,

"change the man on watch in the crow's nest, and order the present watch aft to report to me in the cabin."

When the two boys entered the cabin the following morning Captain Ransom was seated at the table with a steaming cup of black coffee in front of him and a half rolled U. S. Hydrographic Chart held open with a pair of dividers and ruler at his side. Although there were dark circles under his eyes, he greeted the boys with his customary cordiality.

"The top o' the morning to you, lads," he said. "How did you sleep after you turned in? No bad dreams, I hope."

"No, sir," replied The Ewe. "That's what we asked each other first thing this morning. I'm ashamed to say we slept like logs. But we'd like to know, Captain, what you make of it all. You said last night that the ship would be thoroughly searched again at daylight."

Felipe, the newly promoted cook and cabin boy, entered with a plate of ham and eggs and more steaming coffee. The moment he was out of earshot, the Skipper lowered his voice confidentially.

"I'm a white man, an American. I've sailed out of Gloucester for twenty years, round the Horn five times; I've been on ships that were supposed to be haunted but never in my born days have I ever had an experience like last night's. I know we buried Yung Chang at sunset. I know, because I took a final look beneath the blankets before his body was committed to the deep. You saw, too."

"What did Cruze say he saw?" inquired The Ewe.

"At three bells in the morning watch, Cruze said he saw the thin wisps of sulphur fumes coming from the

galley door suddenly take the form of Yung Chang, pigtail and all. The ghost—*Asuang,* these fellows call it—slowly climbed up on the galley hatch and paraded up and down just the same as old Yung did every evening when he had finished scouring his pots and pans. The vessel swung round so that the moonlight struck full upon his face, Cruze said, and he swore it was the same as Yung's only white—white as chalk. This was too much for him so he shouted a warning to the watch below. The moment he shouted the *Asuang* took a flying leap from the hatch cover to the deck and disappeared in the black shadows.

"Both Mr. Brown and I cross questioned him for an hour, but we could not shake his story in the least. I don't know what to believe. I've known Cruze for a long time and he is a quiet sober fellow with little imagination, and not given to drinking Tapuy.

"We've searched everywhere. The crew were mustered at dawn while Brown and I went through the fo'c'sle. There's not room enough in the hold for an additional flea let alone a human being, but we had all the hatch covers off, only to find the seals were unbroken and nothing had been disturbed."

"What about the galley?" asked The Ewe.

"We looked there first. Nothing could live in the sulphur fumes. There's not room enough there for a man to change his mind. Felipe is using the stove and the oven is out of the question as a hiding place. I'd give fifty gold dollars and my grandmother's best silk handkerchief thrown in to solve this riddle before we touch port. If this story gets about I can whistle to kingdom come for a crew. The *Hannah B.* will be

known as the *Asuang* ship from the Batanes to Sibutu if we can't explain that funny business of last night."

Like endless nightmares two days passed, and two nights. The agony of fear became an obsession on the part of all. Captain Ransom tried his utmost to affect his former light-hearted manner; the mask of cheerfulness which he displayed seemed only to deepen the gloom. Mr. Brown tried to follow the lead of his officer and told endless pointless stories of his early seafaring days to which no one paid any attention. The crew made no pretense of jollity and stubbornly refused to do any but the most necessary duties; those off watch maintained an incessant chant, day and night, which the Captain knew no command could stop.

Barney and The Ewe talked together in whispers. Caught in that eerie atmosphere, sharing in part the fears of their shipmates, they yet knew, down deep, that there was no such thing as a ghost; and when they talked of it they fell to figuring how they could prove what they believed, or at least get a look at the thing which had been so frightening. Twice, since that night after the death of Yung, it had been seen—or so natives said; once it was standing in the long boat swung over the port side amidships; again in the galley—Felipe said it was there when he went to light the morning fire to get breakfast. Felipe had fled to the Captain's cabin, but when the search was made of the galley a few moments later not a sign of it could be found, only "Nigger," the black mascot cat, stalked forth licking his chops reminiscently. The crew sought to take vengeance on Nigger, and the Skipper had a time of it to save the mascot's life. All realized that

only a small spark was necessary to start a formidable mutiny. Captain and Mate both carried their revolvers conspicuously in the fulfillment of their duties.

On the third day, soon after noon, long wisp-like clouds appeared above the horizon, the advance guard of the tattered hosts of rain which whipped the seas to a white froth and stung the faces of the weary mariners. The *Hannah B.* bowled along, then, under full canvas, carried southward by the steady monsoon, plunging headlong through the curling whitecaps while the wind whistled through taut halyards and backstays.

"Ready about," sang out Mr. Brown through his cupped hands. "Back your main braces and slacken your windward jibsheet."

"Aye, aye, sir," the bos'n called back. "All clear."

"Hard a lea!"

The quartermaster spun his wheel and the *Hannah B.* came up into the eye of the wind, her main and foresails crackling a mighty crescendo; hesitated but an instant, then squared off on a starboard tack as gracefully as a seagull in full flight.

"Quite a change from yesterday," said Barney, buckling his light oilskin up to his neck.

"Remember what I told you about weather in the China Sea," Mr. Brown replied.

Dinner was late since neither officer dared leave the bridge until the ship was set on her course. The tension of seven days' calm had been cut and dinner when finally served was a merry affair. Duty called the Mate back to the bridge, while the Captain lit his pipe, and recounted stories of the early China tea clippers. Sud-

denly above the screaming of the wind came a wail—it seemed a wail of terror; then the patter of many feet and a scuffle at the entrance to the companionway.

The fear of the unknown returned.

Captain Ransom rose and took up his position behind the table facing the companionway stairs. Above the incongruous red tablecloth a sputtering oil lamp swayed in its socket and cast grotesque shadows into the corners of the room. A knock sounded on the sliding hatch cover above and in response to the Captain's peremptory summons the Mate entered and half flung a cringing native before him, who slipped to the floor unconscious the moment the Mate withdrew his support.

"Stand up and take your medicine, you——" the Mate roared at him and moved forward to administer a kick. The Captain motioned him back.

"I'm still able to run my own ship," the Captain remarked icily, "and can question my own crew, and mete punishments."

"I'm sorry, sir, but it was this son of Belial who started the rumpus all over again. He shouted *Asuang,* and I thought——"

The Captain made no reply but placed the unconscious man in one of the folding chairs. The man's eyes opened and stared vacantly around the room. Then memory returned with a flash and, cringing, he buried his head in his hands, sobbing "The *Asuang,* the *Asuang,* I've seen it! *Madre de Dios! Sanctissima Maria!* It is the truth I speak, Captain."

Captain Ransom patted him reassuringly on the shoulder.

"It's all right now, Flores, there's no *Asuang*. You were excited. The full moon and the rolling of the ship got on your nerves, now wasn't that it?"

"No, no, Captain." A fit of hysterical sobbing and jabbering, which the others waited to have pass, was followed by a period of silence in which the grim metered ticking of the marine clock was clearly audible. The Captain and the Mate exchanged glances and both regarded the huddled form in the chair. Barney swallowed three or four times, making a sort of gurgling sound.

"Come, now, out with it, Flores!" the Skipper commanded. The native raised his head slowly until his eyes met those of the Captain, then his brows rose and his mouth hung open in a look of terror as his gaze shifted to something beyond. He half rose in his chair and pointed screaming:

"There, *there,* Captain—the *Asuang*. It has come for *me!!*"

The little group within the cabin turned and saw what appeared to be the chalky face of Yung Chang grinning down at them through an open porthole. A livid white talon resembling a hand snatched several pilot biscuits from a plate on top of the locker. The Mate fired three shots which splintered the woodwork. The face and hand vanished.

Captain Ransom vaulted toward the companionway; a sudden squall heeled the ship over and he fell sprawling across the floor. Up quickly, he ascended, followed by the Mate. The boys, after, heard the Skipper roar commands to the bos'n to slack away both jib and foresheets.

Together they raced around the cabin hatchway searching for a sign of the *Asuang*.

"He's gone," shouted The Ewe.

"Must have been washed overboard," replied Barney.

The *Hannah B.* had righted herself and was booming along on her course. Barney squatted on a near-by stanchion and proceeded to investigate a damaged elbow.

"Barney," said The Ewe, "what do you make of it now?"

"I'll say he was a hungry ghost to want to eat pilot biscuits," declared Barney. "Here, feel my elbow."

"That's the point," answered The Ewe, ignoring the elbow. "Where has the ghost been seen? Twice coming out of the galley, and once in the long boat. And what is kept in the long boat besides oars and two water butts? Several tins of emergency rations, all of which have disappeared; I know because I looked to-day. And what did the ghost take here? Pilot biscuits. He certainly is a very hungry ghost."

"I congratulate you, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, on your wonderful powers of deduction. But where is the suspect now?" Barney grinned maliciously.

"Not very far from the galley, Watson," retorted The Ewe. "That seems to be the ghost's headquarters."

Four hours later saw two sleepy boys dozing in the reeking confines of the galley. The wind howled in a solemn requiem in the shrouds as the *Hannah B.* thundered and crashed on her way. A bowl of rice and a

pot of fragrant tea adorned the galley table. "That's a tempting bait for any hungry Chinese ghost, Watson," said The Ewe. They had kept up the byplay, finding that it kept them from thinking too seriously about the cause of the whole ship's fear.

The wind blew the door to with a bang and startled the boys into wakefulness.

A lid on one of the farther flour bins moved upward slowly.

Eight bells sounded outside, followed by the patter of many feet as the watch was changed. The cover dropped with a thud. Quick as a flash The Ewe leaped forward and sat on it.

"Notify the Captain, Watson, that we've got his ghost"; he tried to speak crisply to Barney but his voice was a bit tremulous.

A moment later, the Skipper, Mr. Brown, and Barney reappeared.

"What's this Barney tells me?"

"I'm sitting on top of the ghost, Captain. He's in this flour bin."

"Hop off and let's have a look." The Ewe slid to the floor and the cover popped up revealing a flour-covered Chinaman who resembled a clown-like Oriental jack-in-the-box.

"H-m-m!" said the Captain. "A Chink stowaway, trying to beat his way to Manila without the formality of a passport. I might have guessed."

"You wantchee cook?" replied the Celestial standing in the barrel, his imperturbable calm scarcely ruffled. "Can cook, can make apple pie Melican like, too," he added.

"You win," laughed the Captain. "If your apple pie is as good as your nerve you stay; otherwise, go jail-side Manila."

"Can do," was the laconic reply.

"Well, boys, I'm certainly in your debt. I said something about fifty dollars; I'll make it fifty apiece."

"I thought your grandmother's silk handkerchief was the reward, too," laughed Barney.

"You can match for it," the Captain answered.

"Are you on, Watson?" said The Ewe.

And Barney shouted: "Sure Mike, Sherlock!"

UNDER THE BILGE

BY ARTHUR H. LITTLE

NERVE? Say! Speaking of nerve reminds me of Bud Moody and the steamer *Farwell*—what she did to us and what he did to her.

For a steamboat, a steel six-hundred-footer that was the flagship and the pride of the Inland Steamship Company, the biggest freight line on the Great Lakes, the *James A. Farwell* surely was in a funny fix.

There she lay, head up, tail down, half her length out of water, her nose in the back end of a garage on Colorado Avenue—a garage that stood a city block from the river's edge—and her stern a-settle in the mud of Southport channel. Honestly, she looked downright disreputable.

She'd been caught in the annual freshet in March, when the river, ice-locked all winter, had broken loose and messed up the whole harbor. The *Farwell,* in winter quarters at the Southport Shipyard, where she had been launched with much ceremony less than a year before, had snapped her mooring lines and, carrying only a worried ship-keeper and his wife, had swung out into the river and drifted downstream for a dozen lengths or so, then veered to starboard with a cross current, poked her nose across what normally is about a hundred yards of dry land, and smacked her stem for

thirty feet through the corrugated iron rear wall of a public garage owned by a perfect stranger.

Next morning, when the pack ice at the river mouth let go and the water level fell sixteen feet in three hours, the *Farwell* sat down right where she was. As far as she was concerned, the arrangement could be permanent. "And," she seemed to ask, "whose business is it?"

Well, for one, it was the garage man's. He was annoyed. "I admit that I admire boats," he said. "I enjoy seeing them pass in the river. But I don't like 'em so all-fired chummy as this one is. She's ruined my heating plant."

It was the business, also, of quite a number of others. It came to concern our boss, Old Man Strang, and our whole marine-contracting outfit.

It concerned the Inland Steamship Company, which owned the *Farwell.*

It concerned the Continental Railroad, whose coal-loading docks lie straight across the river from where the *Farwell* had sat down.

It concerned the city of Southport.

It concerned the Southport *Morning Sentinel*—in particular the *Sentinel's* bespectacled young editor, by name Milton Dante Crandall.

But mostly, it came to concern our diver, Bud Moody—Moody, with his red hair and his freckles and his hair-trigger ways. Maybe it would be nearer the truth to say that he came to concern it. For when Moody uprose and reached out and took the situation by the tail, he—— But wait.

The layout was complicated. Aside from having

punched the rear of the garage man's garage and aside from having tied up the two-million-dollar investment that she herself represented, the *Farwell* was impeding navigation. Her after end, some three hundred feet of it, stuck straight out into the river at a point where the channel width is just about four hundred feet—pointed straight at the Continental Railroad's coal docks and cut them off, you might say, from the world.

And there, for two months, the *Farwell* had lain. Meanwhile, lake navigation had opened. And meanwhile, too, there was talk of lawsuits—mostly against the city. The city had been negligent by failing to keep the harbor mouth free of pack ice, the city had brought on the March freshet. That was what the garage man said; but he was merely echoing, I think, what had been said by the Continental Railroad.

Of the two parties, one—the garage man I believe, was sincere. He probably had a real grievance.

But the Continental Railroad—well, that was different. For years, the Continental had been fighting the city, fighting over franchises for spur tracks, fighting over rights along the river, fighting over tax assessments. And the feud had involved others, principally our own boss, John Strang. When the Continental had proposed to widen its track space just south of the Nickel Plate bridge by building out into the river for some seventy feet and then "compensating" the city by dredging away seventy feet of the opposite bank, the Old Man had stepped forward as a citizen and protested. He protested so well that both the city council and the federal government said to

the Continental: "No, you can't do it. It amounts to a steal."

Beaten, the Continental had proved to be a poor sport. It longed for a chance, so we were sure, to "ride" our Old Man. It harried him. And it dragged into the scrap Southport's biggest newspaper, the *Sentinel*. Not that the *Sentinel* needed much dragging. For, thanks to certain manipulations and financial transactions going back a number of years, the *Sentinel* boasted an editor and half owner in the bespectacled person of Milton Dante Crandall who was the son of old Joseph P. Crandall; and Joseph P. Crandall was the Continental Railroad's Southport Division Superintendent and a power in the Continental's councils.

That, then, was the line-up when the *Farwell* climbed halfway out of the river in March and left her stern out in the channel.

On the advice of the city solicitor, the mayor himself called a public conference in the council chamber of the city hall. "Come on in," he said to the garage man, the steamship company, and the railroad, "and we'll talk this thing over and see if we can't settle it." And that seemed reasonable enough.

"Let's go down and listen to the meeting," Bud Moody suggested to me. "Perhaps there'll be some fireworks." And down to the city hall the two of us went.

Well, they met. Everybody brought along a lawyer, or two or three. And what the mayor had thought was going to be a nice, brotherly little chat turned into a row.

"We'll sue to-morrow!" said the lawyers for the garage man.

"And we!" said the lawyers for the Continental Railroad.

"And if everybody else sues," said the lawyers for the steamship company, "we'll sue, too."

Then it was that 'way back in the corner among the spectators a bearded little man arose, our chief, John Strang. Bud Moody and I we'd got ourselves a couple of ringside seats up against the rail; and we hadn't even known the old gentleman was in the room. He began to speak gravely and low.

"Gentlemen," he said, "as a citizen of Southport, I venture a suggestion. In all your discussion thus far I haven't heard mentioned what seems to me to be the most important point. And that is—when is the *Farwell* to be floated? You talk of lawsuits; but I've heard no one speak of the possibility of removing the cause. You talk of suing the city. Southport, gentlemen, is your city and my city—our city. Here we live and work and earn our livings. When we talk of what the city owes us, let's not forget what we owe her."

"Mostly," spoke up one of the railroad lawyers, "we seem to owe her taxes."

"But, sir," the Old Man came back at him, "she gave your railroad a harbor."

"And when this gentleman," interposed the city solicitor, indicating Mr. Strang, "when this gentleman speaks of the harbor, he speaks of something rather close to his heart, for he created it. Twenty years ago, when the Southport Steel Company offered to bring

its great plant here if Southport would provide a harbor, the city was broke. And this gentleman came forward and said, 'I'll do it.' He did it—turned his dredges loose and dredged a harbor for us four miles long. And it didn't cost the city a cent!"

The Old Man smiled. "But all that," he remarked, "was twenty years ago. This is now. May I repeat the suggestion, gentlemen, that you discuss how and when the *Farwell* is to be floated?"

A dozen pairs of shoulders shrugged.

"Perhaps," said one of the lawyers for the railroad, "*you* have some suggestions."

The Old Man wasn't smiling now. "Young man," he said, "I have. I have inspected the *Farwell*. I believe she can be floated."

"She can?" the lawyer demanded. "In how long?"

The Old Man was mad. He snapped: "Ten days!"

"Can you do it?"

"I can! The job will cost the steamship company exactly what it costs me. And you may draw up a joint contract, establishing that if I fail to float the *Farwell* in ten days, you all can collect your damages without lawsuit, from me!"

Bud Moody, grinning in ecstasy, jolted me in the ribs and whispered: " 'Atta boy!"

Right there in the room, the contract was drawn and signed. And at six o'clock that night, working under acetylene flares, our outfit ganged the *Farwell*.

From our headquarters up the river we brought down the three Strang tugs, the *True*, the *Cascade*, and the *American Eagle*. We brought down also two

big derrick scows that we rigged with water jets; a hydraulic jack; and two diving rigs—his regular one and a spare—for Bud Moody.

Structurally, the *Farwell* was in perfect health. She'd gone on the mud when she was light. No holes in her plating, no special damage anywhere. Just in wrong, that was all, with half her huge weight of steel on land and half in the water.

"The big brute thinks," Bud Moody remarked to me, "that she's an amphibian—maybe an alligator."

"She does," I said. "And it looks to me as if the easiest way to get her back into the water would be to take her apart, carry her back to the shipyard, put her together there and then launch her all over again."

We went to work on her from two ends. At her bow and inside the punctured garage, the rigging gang set up the hydraulic jack—brought it to bear just at the under-curve of her stem, so that it could lift, and, at the same time, push sternward.

At her after end, Bud Moody, dolled up in helmet and rubber suit and accompanied by a submarine flood light, went down to explore. For a hundred feet or more, starboard and port, feeling his way about under twelve to twenty feet of water, he sized up her position. Then, at his signal, we hauled him up and unscrewed his face plate.

"Tight!" he said to Old Man Strang. "She's cut a sloping channel for herself straight back into the mud. Back aft here, around her wheel and rudder, she's fairly free. But forward of that, where her bilge starts, she's jammed in."

"Blackie," the Old Man said to me, "rig up those jets."

I rigged four of them, two on each side. A jet is a stream of water shot through a nozzle at the end of a long pipe that you manipulate from the surface. The idea is to excavate—in close quarters—by scouring. Our plan was to cut the freighter loose along her sides.

With the four jet pumps howling, the Old Man next built the *Farwell* a harness. Around her bow and back along her sides he looped a steel cable as big as your arm, the ends running out a hundred and fifty feet or so aft of her stern, the lengths along her sides suspended halfway up her plating by heaving lines made fast to her deck.

The three tugs backed into position and took hold of that cable.

"Now, Blackie," the Old Man said to me, "go forward to the jack at her stem. When you hear the *True* whistle, start the jack and we'll give her a trial pull."

I went forward and waited. "Shoot!" said the *True;* and the boys of the rigging gang, manning the big jack, bent their backs to lift some six thousand tons.

Back there astern of her I could hear the three tugs, the *True* and *Cascade* on one side and the *Eagle* on the other, tearing loose. "Wooo-wooo—wooo-wooouh!" said the *True's* high-pitched siren—"Give 'er the gaff!"

Sparks shot upward from the three belching funnels as the three straining tugs, the river water boiling and churning astern of each of them, piled their weight and every ounce of their power upon that line.

Forward, I watched the *Farwell's* towering stem.

Slowly, with the upward surge of the jack, it rose. But that was all. The jack went up to its full height—a foot, not more. At the *Farwell's* stern, the three tugs, their exhaust pipes barking, toiled and writhed and swung their quivering lengths from side to side.

But the *Farwell* didn't budge.

Then, "Wooouh!" said the *True*—"Shut off!" And the din subsided.

Back aft I went to find the Old Man. I found him in council with Bud Moody. "What she needs, I think, sir," Bud told him, "is a lot more of that jetting."

We sent the *True* back to headquarters for more jets—four of them. I hooked them up; and Bud Moody, back in his helmet again, went down and placed them himself, then came up to get out of their way; and we scoured away for three hours. Then down went Moody again to inspect.

"Pits," he said, when we'd hauled him back to the surface and unscrewed his face plate. "Dog-goned clay down there seems to be all full of pockets of sand. Comes out in big holes and leaves the clay in between. Give 'er some more."

We scoured some more—about an hour—and then the three tugs and the hydraulic jack went into action again. But no go. Not an inch, not a tenth of an inch, would the *Farwell* move.

Daylight found us still alternating between the jets and the tugs; and along those lines we pounded away all that day. At nightfall the Old Man laid out a schedule for eight-hour shifts, Moody and the Old Man himself and I to catch cat naps when we could on the bunks in the pilot houses of the tugs.

All that night we wrestled the *Farwell* and all the next day and all *that* night and the next day after that. The following morning the Old Man chartered another tug from the Interlake Towing—the *Samson,* a big steeple-compound—and she, with our own tugs, horsed away at that steel cable for two solid hours. And did the *Farwell* notice the difference? Not by half a hair.

In four days, Bud Moody had slept, I think, a total of about seven hours. His face was drawn and white—so white that the freckles stood out on him as if he'd been spattered with red hull-paint. His eyes followed Old Man Strang.

"Blackie," the redhead said to me, "how do you think she looks?"

"Not so good," I told him. "And as she goes along, she keeps looking worse. If you want my opinion, we're stumped."

He nodded, then turned and gazed across the river. "Trouble is, I think," he said, "those tugs haven't any foothold. You know—the old wheel slippage wastes their power. Ain't anything they can get their *teeth* into. Seems like there ought to be some other way!"

And then, on the eighth day, the Old Man tried something different. "The tugs need leverage," he said. "We'll give them a better chance. We'll run a block-and-fall line across the river, with the anchor block over on the other side. Blackie, you lay out the falls. Four-sheave steel blocks. Reeve 'em with cable. And I'll arrange with the Continental Railroad people for permission to anchor to that clump of piling over there beyond their tracks on the bend."

"And this," Bud Moody remarked to me confidentially, "is something like it. This will fetch her."

Well, my part of the plan went through. I rove the blocks. But we never used them. For, when the Old Man called the Continental Railroad's division offices on the telephone, he talked with Division Superintendent Crandall; and within twenty minutes Crandall himself, big and grizzled and bear-like, was on hand in person.

"If you string that tackle to that clump of piling," he barked at our Old Man, "you'll block two of our river-side tracks."

"Yes," said our chief, "temporarily."

"Can't be done," said Crandall.

"You refuse me permission?"

"I do! I don't consider it advisable."

"But," the Old Man urged, "your railroad company claims to be suffering by the *Farwell's* position. Those two waterside tracks of yours are merely sidings, both empty now. The harbor, you admit, is blocked. Yet you'd handicap me."

"You can construe my action," Crandall snapped, "as you please!"

Our chief's eyes narrowed. "I see," he said. "I see! Your company's idea is to punish *me*. You're thinking of those damages you're going to collect. Crandall, get off my work! *Get out!*"

Without a word, Crandall turned and marched off.

Bud Moody, resting in his armor between dives, with his helmet on the deck beside his heavy three-legged stool near the edge of the derrick scow's deck, watched the performance, then turned, spat carefully

into the river, looked up at me and remarked:

"And that's that!"

W-e-l-l! The next morning's *Morning Sentinel* honored us with half its front page. An editorial, I guess you'd call it, set in big type. It told about that argument; anyway, it told the *Sentinel's* version. An astonishing, exasperating version! Our chief, so the newspaper said, had refused, "point blank," to coöperate with the railroad in the work of removing an obstruction from the harbor. And not only had he "refused to listen to the railroad company's suggestions, but, when approached in person by one of the railroad's officials, Strang had flown into a rage and, assuming doubtful authority, ordered the railroad official to 'get out.'"

And the piece wound up like this: "Who owns Southport harbor? Is a self-constituted martinet, upon the basis of a dim, legendary record of having 'donated' the harbor to the city, to assume a maritime dictatorship?"

We read the thing, Bud Moody and I, sitting together on the bunk in the pilot house of the *True*. When we finished, Bud whirled on me and his eyes were blazing.

"Who wrote that?" he demanded.

"Why," I told him, "I suppose the editor did—young Crandall."

"The bird that wears specs?"

"The same," I said. "Old Man Crandall's little boy."

"Huh!" said Bud. "Let's go get 'em."

"No," I told him. "We've got work to do."

Work we had, and plenty of it. Twenty-four hours to go. The Old Man, a copy of the *Morning Sentinel* rolled in his hand like a bandmaster's little stick, ran the job from the *Farwell's* deck. Forbidden to string tackle across the river, he'd proceed along the lines on which we'd begun. Eight water jets were roaring away now, scouring away at the clay. Four hydraulic jacks instead of one were straining at her stem. And at her stern, on the steel cable, four big tugs, eating coal and churning water.

And then—Zing! went a steam line on the derrick scows. And the water jets stopped like that!

Moody hadn't yet climbed into his diving rig for the day. I grabbed him as a helper and the two of us tied into that broken steam pipe. We'd unbolted it and the Old Man himself had gone up over the bank for two lengths of five-inch flanged piping, when behind Moody and me somebody said: "Good-morning!"

We turned. And there on the deck, spectacles and all, stood the young Mr. Milton Dante Crandall, editor of the *Sentinel,* himself.

"Good-morning!" I said.

And Bud Moody slowly laid down a wrench and very carefully stood up.

"Wait, Bud!" I said. Then to Crandall: "Well, sir, what can we do for you?"

I give the guy credit. He had the sand to smile. "I've come down here," he said, "to get some atmosphere."

"Huh!" I grunted. "Well, if it's the air you want, see Mr. Strang."

"No," and he smiled again and shook his head.

"No, I don't want to interview him. Perhaps, after what the *Sentinel* said this morning, Mr. Strang feels a little put out. I hope, however, that he'll come to see that that was merely one of the fortunes of war. As I say, I'm looking for atmosphere. You see, as a side line, I'm writing a book on fresh-water diving and submarine salvage work. I want the experience of going down in a suit on this job."

Bud Moody stared, then turned to me with: "Blackie, the guy means it!"

"Yeh," I said, "but it can't be done."

"It can't!" said the redhead. And before I could stop him he was dragging out the rig. I admit, I didn't exactly fight him. Let the cocky young writer fellow see how it felt under water, I thought. It wouldn't feel so good to a greenhorn, but it would not hurt him. Or anybody else. The Old Man was nowhere in sight. We were shut down, temporarily. And here was this poor sap *asking*—well, yes, I did help put him into Bud's suit. And then I manned the air pump.

Carefully, Moody led him to the edge of the derrick scow's deck. Then, just before he screwed on the face plate, Bud said to him:

"Keep your head. You'll notice the air pressure a little; but pay no attention to that. This ladder here goes down to within about six feet of the bottom. When you get to the bottom rung, drop off. The river bottom has been scoured smooth by water jets and you can walk around. If you want to come up, or if we want you to come up, the signal is two jerks on the life line. And watch your step for pits!"

On went the face plate; and down the ladder, his

helmet nodding with every laborious step, went young Crandall—down until the air valve went under and then on down out of sight. Bud was acting as tender.

"Well, Bud," I asked him, as I rolled the big wheel of the air pump, "what's the idea? Going to haze him a little?"

"No!" he snapped. "No monkey business!"

We watched the bubbles rising from Crandall's helmet. Having reached the bottom easily, he was taking a little stroll. The bubbles moved toward the *Farwell's* port side, near her rudder post, then away from us and toward the river bank. Moody, paying out the life line and the air hose, looked a little anxious. On went the bubbles, to the point where the freighter's bilge began, then past that point—on and on. Moody looked at me, shook his head doubtfully, then turned to the bubbles again. On they went, straight into the narrow channel between the *Farwell's* side and the clay bottom—and then paused. And then stopped.

. . I saw Moody jerk the life line twice. Then twice again! He turned to me.

"Blackie," he said, "get two more men here! Put one on that pump. The other will stand tender for me. That guy's in a jam down there, and I'm going down!"

I buckled him into the spare suit and down he went —no ladder for him, just stepped off the deck, kerplunk, salt-water style. I watched his bubbles, saw them move toward the others, reach them, saw them pause while the two lines of bubbles mingled in a single stream—a minute—two minutes—four minutes

—five. Then yank-yank on the life line and Bud came to the surface. We ripped off his face plate.

"Fright, probably," he said. "Bewildered. Happens often under water. He's down there under the *Farwell's* bilge—yes, under her bilge!—trapped in one of those devilish pits. And I can't get him loose. Blackie, get this suit off me!"

Half numb, I was, but I helped him strip off that suit. His red hair flamed in the sun. He turned to the man at the pump and said, *"Keep that pump going!"* Then to the other man I had called, "And you take this air hose and life line and stand tender for that man down there."

Then to me: "Blackie, we can't get him out from under her; but we can take *her* off *him*—I think. See those railroad tracks across the river? See how they curve straight away from the *Farwell's* stern? C'mon! We're going somewhere."

Up the bank he led the way, up to that caved-in garage at the *Farwell's* bow. In front of the place stood a service car. To the garage man Moody said, "We're going to borrow that Ford."

And borrow it we did, with Moody behind the wheel, before the garage man could open his mouth. We headed south, Moody giving her the gas.

"Where to?" I asked him.

He jerked the answer at me over his shoulder: "Continental Railroad offices."

We crossed the Erie Bridge at thirty-five an hour, took River Avenue southward at forty-five and fetched up with a shudder at the old brick Continental Build-

ing. Then out over the side, both of us, and into the building. At a railing in a corridor we were stopped by a clerk.

"Crandall!" said Moody. "We want to see Mr. Crandall."

"Sorry," the clerk said, "but Mr. Crandall is engaged."

"Where?"

"In there." And he nodded toward a door beyond.

"Uh!" said the redhead. The clerk, impelled by two freckled and red-haired hands on his shoulders, suddenly sat down; and Bud and I went on through.

In his private office, Crandall, cross-legged in a huge armchair, was dictating to a stenographer. He looked up, puzzled, then thrust his square jaw at us and asked: "Well?"

"My name's Moody," Bud said. "I work for John Strang. I want ten locomotives."

"You want *what?*"

"Ten locomotives."

Crandall snorted. Then slowly he smiled. "Ten locomotives, eh? Couldn't you use an even dozen?"

"All right!" Bud shot back at him. "Make it a dozen. I want 'em at the bend opposite where the *Farwell* lies. But I need 'em *now*. Your son, Mr. Crandall, in a diving suit, is trapped in a pit under the bilge of that freighter. I aim to get him out."

Well, mister! A railroad office can *move!* Bang, bang, bang—like that! Crandall, firing questions at Bud, was punching push buttons at the same time and shooting orders.

Where those engines came from, I don't know. But

Old Man Crandall got them, two strings of six big freight engines each. And down through the yards, in ten minutes, went roaring the queerest pair of trains that any railroad man ever saw. One of them carried the division superintendent.

Moody and I, we piled back into the Ford and sprinted her back to the *Farwell*.

That speed! While the air pumps droned on, sending atmosphere to that fellow under the *Farwell's* side, we shifted everything clear of the freighter's stern, then sent two tugs across the river, each one dragging six hundred feet of steel cable, which the rigging gang linked to the *Farwell*'s steel harness; and over on the other side, a half-dozen brakemen linked each cable to the rearmost of a battery of six locomotives. Then the tugs! Each one backed down and caught a side-hold.

Bud Moody climbed into the rigging of one of the derrick scows, shouted to me, "All right, Blackie, give 'er the jacks!"

Boy, oh, boy! Sixteen steel bearcats, twelve of them on land and four of them in the river, moved ahead against that cable and up it came, straightening out, dripping water, tight, twanging with the strain! Moody, shouting, sawed the air. And sixteen throttles swung open. Sixteen funnels belching fury. Sixteen sweating firemen, heaving in the coal!

And the *Farwell* moved. Squealing a little as she let go her hold on earth, she shivered, jerked a little, jerked again, then began to slide sternward. And sixteen grinning engineers kept her sliding until, at last, out of her long, shiny, muddy, sloping channel into the

river bank, she floated free and the tugs whipped her after end upriver.

Bud Moody, when I reached him, was at the edge of the derrick scow, hauling in, hand over hand, on a life line and air hose. Up came a helmet. Four men it took to lift out that helmet and what was under it —just limp weight.

I twisted off the face plate. Crandall, his face white as steam, grinned at me and asked, "What happened?"

A hand touched my elbow. Beside me stood Old Man Strang. He had just arrived. "Perhaps," he said, "perhaps one of you can explain where those locomotives came from. But what I want to know first is: Who on earth is this diver?"

"Name is Crandall," said Bud Moody. "He wrote a piece about you in this morning's paper. I thought maybe you'd like to sort of reason with him. And besides—well, I kind o' like the guy!"

No, there weren't any lawsuits—not against anybody. Even the garage man called it quits. He moved. The *Sentinel* explained and apologized. And Old Man Crandall, demon railroader, tried his darnedest to give our outfit a private car!

A PIGTAIL RAT TALE

BY ARTHUR MASON

"NOWADAYS," said Sam, "a man never knows wot he sails on. Never knows a thing till he gets out on 'em. Then you begin to get washed off 'em, or worked stiff, or else they'll sink clean away from under you."

"The *Rosabelle* wasn't a bad old 'ooker," interrupted Jack reflectively, as he carefully assembled the last few crumbs of cracker hash on his plate, "my word, she were better'n this packet for tucker."

"Better for tucker, right enough, but she won't be no beauty in my eyes till the scar she give me head goes away, and that won't be never," answered Sam sourly.

"Maybe, maybe, but a man could sleep a bit on 'er in 'is watch below. Now wot 'ave we 'ere, Hi sye? Wot but a Chinese cook, and a ship full o' rats? Why, bless me soul, they'll eat the bloody lot of us afore ever we makes Port Adelaide!"

"That ain't the wust, Jack, I ain't been going to sea all these years with me eyes closed."

Eight bells rang out, and the man on the lookout shouted:

"The lights are burning bright, sir!"

"Relieve the wheel and the lookout!" The mate's voice sounded husky.

Sam ran for the wheel. As he passed the galley

door there was a fine click, and he fell that moment to the deck struggling and cursing. The galley door swung back transversely. Out of the doorway, swinging in the same rhythm, but longitudinally, emerged a long pigtail. A small Chinaman, dignified and quiet, was attached to the end of it, and followed it out.

Without a change of expression he stood looking at the unhappy seaman, making no motion to help him.

"Me ketchem velly fine lat, he, he, chee hee," he said passionlessly.

"You fellows trying to run this ship?" inquired the mate, with evil meaning, giving his trousers a hitch as he walked forward with a Blackball swagger, "'cause if you are, now's the time to commence."

"He's not a bully, sir," said Jack pathetically, while he continued to writhe and swear, "'e's 'elpless, that's all."

The mate put his foot on Sam.

"Get out of there," he said, "you can't come that on me."

Then, impressed in spite of himself, by Sam's fearlessness of him, while he continued to fight his fetters, he ordered Jack to fetch a lantern. Jack went off, saying to himself that "pore old Sam were gettin' ready for this 'ere fit for some time."

The Chinese cook tried to make the mate understand.

"What for you no sabbie? He ketchem tlap. Tlap. Lat tlaps."

Sam at last found tongue. In an emery-ground voice he murmured:

"Me feet are fouled, sir. It's a rat trap, that's what

it is. Oh, why did I ever come aboard this ship! It's another blunder, that's what it is."

Jack appeared with the lantern. The crew gathered round snickering. Sam held up his feet while they cleared them of the cook's rat-snares.

"Will ye 'ave a bit o' water, matey?" inquired Jack solicitously.

Sam didn't even answer him, but his look spoke for him, as he stumped aft to the wheel.

The *Rucker* was a small barque, with a leg-o'-mutton spanker, bound away for Port Adelaide, Australia, some fifteen years ago. For days before she sailed Sam and Jack had made visits to her, sizing her up from every possible angle of comfort and seaworthiness in endless contemplation. How could they forsee cavorting rats in the forecastle, and the Chinese cook with mysterious ways?

One of the crew preached tolerance.

"Ye jest ain't used to him; as time goes on he'll grow on ye."

" 'Ow d'ye account for that?" and Jack, having removed his pipe from his mouth for the purpose, waved it, wandlike, toward the galley door, from which, as from an incantation, small spirals of smoke would be seen to issue through the panels, and delicate odors become perceptible to the twitching nostrils of the silent forecastle.

"Punk sticks. It's his religion," came from the crew.

"Punk sticks and religion. Fiddlesticks, I says," said Jack bitingly. " 'E's got somethink in 'is 'ead, and no

mistyke. That somethink is rats. Blimey, rats, mates. 'E's a-smoking of 'em out."

There was dead silence. Sam shivered. Jack's pipe spluttered ostentatiously.

"The beggar 'e drives 'em into the forecastle," he continued after a dramatic interval. "And in they comes a-carryin' the plague, every bally one of 'em. Enough to make a corpse out o' every mother's son of us. Oh, but we be in a likely mess!"

He broke off, and walked out and over to the lee rail, singing bitterly, "Leave her, Johnny, leave her."

The *Rucker's* rats did a thriving business in the ship's galley, and in the forecastle, too. Old slush and old shoes they hankered after, and they liked to tear up and carry off the shoddy wads of old boarding-house quilts from almost under the very eyes of the owners who cherished these smeared and spotted agents of warmth.

The Chinese cook resorted to all his cunning to rid the galley of them, carrying a slingshot about with him loaded with bits of coal whose bituminous blackness and hexagon shape made splurges all over the fair paintwork that is the owner's pride.

"You no sabbie?" he would say, pointing to some self-conscious sailor, "bimeby him die preg, lat bite, chee, hee, hee!"

The crew were beside themselves with nervousness, and took ceaseless and odd precautions against that scourge that seemed about to send them to the sharks. They talked gloomily among themselves, many letters home were written. They began to neglect the little things around the deck.

Then only did the captain notice that something was wrong, for he was fussy of stray rope and ragged ends, proud of the *Rucker,* and dignified with the crew. How they could grow careless in these vital matters he could not see, and his wedge face set to the worry of analysis, and orders came more sharply in his nasal voice.

One night when the barque was heading away south in the Trades—it was in the eight to twelve watch—the captain was walking the poop. The night was beautiful, the wind was warm, and the sails were full. The waves were not enough to roll the *Rucker.* Everything was unusually still around the deck. The forecastle might have been deserted, so quiet it was. The watch on deck sat on the fore hatch. There wasn't a murmur from them.

So deathlike was the stillness that the captain suspected that all was not well with the crew. So he quietly went forward, tiptoeing along the deck to the forecastle. By the barest glimmer of light within he could see rows of empty salt-butter firkins delicately propped on end on the forecastle floor, ready to fall upon any creature that might stray within them. Trigger sticks, with long rope yarns tied to them, were stretched along to the various bunks. Under the firkins were queer arrangements of bait; pieces of hardtack soaked in coffee, rings of salt pork, saltier than the seas; even sugar, saved at enormous sacrifice, out of the whack of their victuals.

As the captain's eyes grew accustomed to the light, he could discern other strange eyes glowing from underneath blankets at the baited firkins. Each sailor

held a rope yarn as he lay smothering in his bunk, and there was a deadly aim in his sleepless eye. Where the captain stood no one could see him, even from the galley. Therefore he could gaze calmly on another eye—almond-shaped, more deadly than any of those that blinked from the bunks.

The partition between the galley and the forecastle had a tiny door, big enough to push food through, and used only in bad weather. Back of that shelf of a door, which now was partly open, stood the Chinese cook looking in. The suspense seemed to freeze him to the galley floor. He was as still as the bow anchors, and apparently as immovable. His legs were braced apart; in his hands he held the slingshot with a deadly slug of coal—ready to shoot.

The captain was about to break the stillness with the demand for an explanation, when he caught sight of an unusually large black rat circling around among the firkins. Simultaneously all breathing in the bunks seemed to stop, the rope yarns running to the firkins trembled.

The rat calmly inspected the tempting morsels displayed so artlessly on the forecastle floor, then scratched a flea from his back, then stood upon his hind legs and sniffed. Never a move did he make toward a butter firkin. The moment was awful. There wasn't a heave from the bulks in the bunks. Even the captain forgot his ship.

A silent flicker grew in the slant eyes of the Chinaman. He stretched the slingshot, a pirate smile creeping into his high cheeks, his lips tightened. He humped his back to take aim on the rat. A cockroach would

have made a noise in stillness like that. The sweating sailors stared with one accord at a single firkin—Jack's. The rat was almost under it.

Then the Chinese cook, as much on edge as the others, and totally unsuspected by them, let drive with the slingshot, and missed the big black rat.

In less than a second the panting crew were on the forecastle floor.

"Blast yer pig-tail soul," shouted Jack, "'ow's we goin' to ketch 'im now? We 'ad 'im when you'se with your lump of coal scared 'im away. 'E was in hour part o' the ship, not in your'n. Wot right 'ad you to interfere?"

The cook, wildly excited, stuck his head through the trap door.

"Whaffor you talk allom time sleep sleep whaffor me killom lat me killom lat plenty time you no sabbie bimeby dead. Hee, hee, chee, chee——" and trailing off into Chinese of a shrill and reproachful nature, he withdrew his head, and slammed the tiny door.

The captain, with a new interest in the little things that go on in a sailor's life, walked aft.

The *Rucker* had weathered the Doldrums, and was leading away for the Cape of Good Hope. The crew went silently but alertly about their work. The ship seemed rid of rats now, all but the black one, and the forebodings of the men had turned to a superstitious dread of him almost amounting to pride. They hunted him cannily but boasted of his escape.

"Them others went under the firkins peaceful, Jack, but he just seems to know. I'd feel mighty happy if

he were out of the way. A man ain't comfortable with the likes of him around."

" 'E mikes me flesh creep, 'e does, 'e isn't willin' to eat the syme as we. 'E's a tofty beggar, 'e is."

The watch below were discussing matters in the forecastle. It was some time since the cook's punk sticks had sent their odorous tendrils curling through the forecastle door, and the emanation of a warm odor now struck their jaded noses with fresh emotion.

"Smell?" said one.

"Wot is it?"

"Smells like gingerbread."

"Sure not. Cook ain't so gentle an' kind as all that."

" 'E is."

They crowded up to the crack to smell. The odor was unmistakable. Hot, spicy, done to a turn. They could hear the oven door open and close again, the edge of the pan rasp the edge of a shelf. They dared not say a word. They simply had to wait for supper.

Supper came and went, and no gingerbread. Their disappointment was pitiful to see. Eight bells, and the watch changed. Incoming and outgoing met on a deck nicely baited with lumps of gingerbread. Just where a rat might run.

"Blimey stiff, Sam, look 'ere," said Jack, almost weeping. "Look wot that blarsted cook's done wif our cayke. It's about all a man can stand, that's wot it is."

As if called from the air, the Chinaman appeared among those unhappy sailors.

"Lat likem gingerbread," he said affably, "poison

alltime. You better not eat, sabbie?" and disappeared, followed by their language, into the galley.

After that the hunt was on again, in such good earnest that, as they rounded the Cape of Good Hope, and the last leg to Australia began, the mate thought it his duty to tell the captain how matters stood.

"The *Rucker* is getting to be a show, sir," he said sadly, "and it's all over the rat. They strike at him with capstan bars and belaying-pins, and they miss him and cleave the decks. Look at the bruised places in the teakwood rail."

"Something's got to be done and done quickly," said the captain. "Call the crew aft."

They came aft suspiciously, taking their pipes out of their mouths as they passed the mainmast. In daylight that secret part of the ship belonged to the officers, if not at night when the black rat was abroad.

"Men," said the captain, "I don't like the way you carry on around the decks. This ship isn't a target. Of course I know that you are not naturally destructive, and I'll tell you what I am going to do. The rat is the cause of it, and the rat has to be caught. I will give a pound note and two days' shore leave at Port Adelaide to the man who kills him. Get him as soon as you can, and above all don't mutilate the *Rucker*."

The Chinese cook laughed and went away. Afterward Chinese songs came from the galley one after another for hours.

The crew moved forward silently. Sam and Jack leaned over the bulwark rail side by side—confidentially.

"'E's afraid o' the bloomin' plague 'isself, carn't you see? Catch 'em givin' away a quid and two days ashore! Blimey, Sam, why did us ship on 'er?"

"If it ain't one thing it's another, Jack. You can't tell a thing about them till you get on them."

That night, and for many nights to come, the firkins were baited with choice morsels. The crew slept with one eye open, and sniffed the deck like hounds. The Chinese cook hid snares baited with food from the captain's table, to the envy of the forecastle. Still the black rat roamed about, culling the safest bits, always visible, never within reach.

"'E's 'uman, 'e is," they said proudly.

It was not until two days out from Port Adelaide that they had any peace. Then the *Rucker* ran into a bit of a blow. Royals and topgallant sails were taken in, and the seas jabbled over the decks. The rat wasn't to be seen anywhere. The firkins were out of commission. Weapons took the place of trigger-ropes, and the crew slept embedded in old boots, bolts, and hook pots.

"I'm leavin' her here," said Sam, "for good and all, Jack. You can stay, or you can come."

"My word, I'm comin', shipmate, a 'elthy ship for me."

When the barque sailed into Port Adelaide all was serenity aboard and thoughts of the black rat were merged in the business of getting her alongside the wharf where a crowd was gathered to watch her dock.

The tugboat took hold, and whistled her way in.

"Stand by your mooring lines!" shouted the captain.

The crew were divided. Some went aft on the poop, and some on the forecastle head with heaving-lines in

their hands. Sam and Jack stood either side amidships with the cork fenders handy to guard the *Rucker's* sides as she berthed.

A good ship, properly manned, thought the captain, looking them over proudly. He liked, above everything, to come into port with a snap.

With the *Rucker,* as with other ships reaching port, there was a happy peacefulness on board. Dreary nights were forgotten, the sluggings in the doldrums, bad food, and brackish water. The smell of the land under the lee brought visions of foaming ale and the barmaid to beckon a sailor's sixpence.

The barque was half a cable's length away from the wharf, and the captain was walking 'midships on the poop, still surveying the personal appearance of his command, the tugboat was still chug-chugging in otherwise perfect stillness, when suddenly a great clashing of pots and pans arose in the galley. Then screams from the Chinese cook.

The eyes of the crew switched from the wharf with lightning swiftness to the galley. They were all attention. So was the captain. He stopped walking and squinted forward. More screams from the galley, then out on deck bounced the cook, while in front of him ran the black rat, circling in figures of eight on the deck.

"Strike me dead," shouted Jack, "if it ain't 'im. Get 'im, Cookie, 'e's your gyme!"

He was indeed, for discipline held the envious crew in its iron grip. They were under the eyes of the crowd on shore, now weaving about to see what was going on, and their ship's dignity outdid the lust for murder.

Not so the Chinaman. His loose linen clothes and long, swinging pigtail showed his speed, as he went around the rat, who ran around him. Each, from the look there was in his beady eyes, was aware only of the other. The crowd on the wharf, as the ship edged closer, took the keenest interest. They shoved to the very edge, and mortified the captain with their unfeeling advice.

"Stand by to get a line ashore," he roared, "never mind the dock."

Dry and subdued came back the crew's, "Aye, aye, sir."

The rat seemed to sense the hostile crew, and with a quick maneuver he ran between the jumping Chinaman's legs, and scurried into the main rigging. The crowd on shore, thoroughly interested, shouted and cheered, and whistled through their fingers. The Chinaman, apparently possessed of the spirit-power of his ancestors, followed the rat into the rigging. Up went the rat, and up went the cook. The tugboat captain signaled his engines to stop, and with folded arms and eyes aloft on the *Rucker's* mast, he, too, shouted words of encouragement to the pursuer.

When the rat got as far up as the maintop he hesitated, like a lazy sailor, whether to go over the top where gravity was against him, or to take to the Lubber's Hole. That moment was the undoing of him. Breathless, the hunter was upon him. He had now but one alternative, and he took to the mainyard.

Death to rats gleamed from the cook's eyes as he followed. Out they went, the rat limberly picking his steps. The captain of the *Rucker* stood with feet fixed

to the deck, and his eyes were set like side lights on the main yardarm. Deck and dock were silent, and the strain was awful.

A breeze was blowing up there, and the cook's long pigtail was dangling dangerously close. The Chinaman held up one leg to get his slipper to finish the job. The rat seemed to know the end was near. Up went the weapon, and down it came with a bang. The rat ducked, jumped onto the flying queue and hung on.

Wild screams rose from the Chinaman. His pigtail, his beautiful queue, the pride of his race, polluted by a black rat! Regardless of sharp and poisonous teeth he clutched the evil one, and wound and wound the pigtail round his throat. A faint squeal came from the yardarm as the Chinaman with grinding teeth and muscles keyed to gut-string tension choked the life out of him. Little drops of blood spattered down to the deck.

The rat, limber now as a kid glove, lay in the folds of the pigtail. The Chinaman took a half hitch around him and slung him over his shoulder. He came down from aloft with a smile on his face, and walked aft to the poop. There he unhitched the rat, and laid it down at the captain's feet.

"I'll pay you the pound note," said the master of the *Rucker,* "and you may have two days' leave ashore."

The Chinese cook burst out laughing, "Chee hee," then the laughter froze in a single look at his pigtail where lingered a spot of blood, and he hurried away to the galley.

The captain of the tugboat, for lack of further

amusement, rang full speed ahead, and the barque glided gently alongside the wharf.

It was just as she touched that Sam spoke. "Jack," he said, "I'm goin' to leave the *Rucker* anyway."

"Blimey stiff, Sam," said the other. "Hi'll do it, too."

ADMIRAL 'STANGUEY

BY WARREN HASTINGS MILLER

GOOD Lord, give me a ship, if it's only a little one!"

That was Ensign 'Stanguey Brooke's wordless prayer every night. His father was an august captain commanding the dreadnought *Montana* and himself a born leader, the slim young officer fairly burned for independent command. Some day——

But just now 'Stanguey hadn't time to think of any ship, big or small. His mind was mightily occupied with his division on the U.S.S. *Lansing,* for she was at General Muster. They were a sprack lot, those sailormen of 'Stanguey's, and they stood liked a ruled line, with 'Stanguey, magnificent in pressed blues and gleaming gold insignia, strutting in front of them and eyeing each man narrowly with an expression that said, "They're darn well all-right-all-right! Every man Jack of them, or half of them would be in the brig!"

Presently Captain Standish and his party—the Exec, the First, and the Surgeon—came along on inspection.

"Hand—*Salute!*" barked 'Stanguey.

The captain went slowly down the line, stopped be-

fore a man whose knife-lanyard was not just so-so and adjusted it, then smiled a brief commendation at 'Stanguey and passed on.

"He liked us!" 'Stanguey crowed to himself. "Liked us fine! Wish young Wally'd been here to see his grin!" Wally Radnor, a fellow ensign and bosom friend, was on the *Montana,* 'Stanguey's father's ship. And Wally, with Ensign "Dummy" Bickfield, had been associated with 'Stanguey in more than one exciting escapade.

Standish's face was preoccupied as he finished inspection, for he was a young captain with all his fame yet to make, and a knotty problem confronted him. He needed, badly, just the right junior officer to solve it. 'Stanguey Brooke, for instance. 'Stanguey was the youngest ensign on board, but——

"Confound it—he's a born tactician!" Captain Standish said to himself, half an hour later, in the privacy of his cabin and after a deal of hard thinking. "He's *it!* There will be heartburnings among the other youngsters, but I can't help that. This job *needs* a tactician! Someone with initiative enough to grab an opportunity when it comes, and use it."

And then his thoughts traveled back to a spirited scene in the wardroom some time before. They were discussing Lord Nelson, and had securely put him on his pedestal in things naval, when 'Stanguey astounded everyone with: "Just the same, sir, it's a good thing that he never had an American admiral like Decatur or Truxton against him!"

An explosion of gasps had followed that remark. Either it was the height of conceit, or else it needed

instant support with convincing evidence. But 'Stanguey was ready to defend his statement.

"Look at his two great battles of the Nile and Trafalgar, sir!" he began eagerly. "At the Nile, Villeneuve lets himself get caught at anchor with sails furled, and of course Nelson comes down and crushes his van and then all the rest, piecemeal. Decatur would have gotten under way at once. And, having thirteen ships against eleven, he would have given Nelson a run for his money, you bet! And then Trafalgar; Nelson gets up a magnificent battle plan, and then, at the last moment, abandons it and goes for Villeneuve's center in two columns! Why, he was badly 'teed' with raking fire for a whole hour before he got to grips with them!"

The wardroom had laughed at 'Stanguey's youthful enthusiasm, but Captain Standish had asked with a faint smile: "And what would *you* have done if you had been Villeneuve at Trafalgar, youngster?"

"Why, wear ship with my whole center, sir, and bear up with both van and rear. He would attack the rear with his whole fleet, of course, but I could then tack and come down on his flank with the very maneuver Nelson himself had originally planned, cutting through astern with the weather-gauge, and raking heavily before coming up on the other side. I bet Decatur would have done it, if anyone had been so foolish as to come at *him* in column! But all Villeneuve seems to have thought of was getting back to Cadiz."

'Stanguey had made explanatory signs on the tablecloth and the discussion had waxed warm. Captain

Standish was impressed and put in: "Nelson's main idea, really, was to get at them as quickly as possible and begin slogging. We exploded that method in 1812, when we won battle after battle by gunnery plus seamanship; maneuvering to rake and not coming to broadside grips until we had the advantage. And you're right, youngster, that the French never seemed to have had a glimmering of that. It would have been another story with Decatur in command!"

The captain was thinking of that discussion now. Here was a young officer who read up on his profession, not with blind hero-worship but with a critical eye to the beaten man's mistakes, and with brains enough to see the counter-opportunity—there always is one—and make a plan of his own.

"He'll do!" he exclaimed, and sent an orderly for 'Stanguey.

"Ensign Brooke," he began when 'Stanguey had appeared—silent, tall, looking down at him with keen and capable gray eyes—"I'm sending you on advance scout duty. You know our situation here: the *Lansing* and her sister ship, the *Little Rock,* are scout cruisers for our Red Fleet, which is off Montauk. The Blue Fleet is at Rockport, one division of dreadnoughts and six destroyers, defending Boston.

"You also know the world situation, that our navy is weak on cruisers; but we have three hundred and fifty first-class destroyers, which are really small scout cruisers themselves, as fleets of them are doing cruiser duty all over the world at this moment. Well, our little war game really boils right down to this: Are these destroyers of ours really small cruisers and as

good for scout duty as the light cruisers of other navies? And if so, how many of them would be equal to one ship like the *Lansing,* for instance? The Department thinks three to one. That's my job, with the *Lansing* and the *Little Rock* to act as the eyes of the Red Fleet against those six destroyers of the Blue. And I have nothing else but that little Eagle-boat."

He waved a hand out the cabin door at one of those odd, single-masted, slender-funneled ships, anchored on the gray wastes of George's Banks near the flagship. 'Stanguey's heart began to beat rapidly. Command! Even *if* a lowly and despised Eagle-boat!

"I want you to take her, Brooke," went on Captain Standish. "Get up off Gloucester somewhere, and keep an eye on those fellows. Or, first thing I know, they'll rush *Little Rock* and myself in the dark—and out go the eyes of our fleet! Three to one, with torpedoes besides, is mighty heavy odds! And they carry four five-inch rifles apiece. I've got to have some warning, so as to use my maneuvering power! But don't let them see you, by any chance!" he warned 'Stanguey emphatically. "You haven't speed enough to get away. Lie low somewhere, and keep your eyes open; wire me via the commandant at Newport the minute they leave their Rockport base. Think you can do it?"

"Yes, sir," said 'Stanguey, and the way he said it told the captain that he could if it were possible. "Who's on board now?"

"Ensign Bickfield of the Reserve. You know him, I see," Standish added, for 'Stanguey was grinning all over.

"You bet, sir! 'Dummy' we call him; not because

he's dumb at all but because he's no talker. Couldn't be better, sir!" exulted 'Stanguey. "Good old Poached Egg! When the pinch comes, Captain, the Reserve is there. And Dummy's from Gloucester himself and knows every inch of that coast."

"Good! You'll make a team, I see!" laughed the captain. "Well, get on with it! Your orders for detached duty will be ready by the time you are."

They shook hands cordially and 'Stanguey hastened below to pack up. Then, snatching his orders from the yeoman, he tumbled into the gig and started for his ship. Command! The goal of his young ambition! 'Stanguey looked up enthusiastically at this, the first ship of his own, with her high forecastle and flat lines, and carrying two long three-inch anti-aircraft guns. They could be trained up or down or sidewise, those long barkers! The Eagle-boats were laughed at in the Navy—principally because, so far as looks were concerned, a rank landsman had designed and built them. They were not pretty, a sort of cross between a real ship and an automobile, and mostly had been turned over to the Reserve for summer training ships. But 'Stanguey felt that, tactically, they had never had a chance. He'd do more than scout duty, if the opportunity offered!

Dummy met him at the gangway, bullet-headed, round-apple faced, short and ruddy; and with piercing blue eyes smiling up at 'Stanguey's gray ones as they shook hands. "I'm relieving you, old man—scout duty," announced 'Stanguey, producing his orders.

Dummy's face did not change, or show any trace of inward grouch or disappointment.

"That's fine, Brooke! . . . Only, let me stay! Make me landsman or something. I didn't give up my vacation *except* to get into this here war!" He chuckled merrily.

"Nothing like that!" 'Stanguey grinned. "Number One thou art, and Number One thou shalt be, henceforth and forever more!" he went on, thus appointing Dummy executive officer. "We'll make a gunnery officer out of your exec—if he knows one end of a Sims torp from the other."

"He doesn't," said Dummy, "but, like the Irishman with the fiddle, he can try."

"Give him 'Ship and Gun Drills' and let him get to work on torpedo dope!" laughed 'Stanguey. "Have you steam up? I want full turbine; no cruising stuff, this!"

"Just been coaled," said Dummy, and hurried off to give the chief his orders.

'Stanguey proposed to use the Eagle-boat as she was designed. Her two-thousand-horse turbine gave her thirty-five knots, and at that speed they overtook and parted the gray Atlantic swells on their way north. It was after dark when they raised the flashing light on Cape Ann and slowed down. They were in enemy country, now, and the Eagle-boat steamed with every light out lest one of the Blue destroyers pick her up.

"Now then, Dummy, what do you know?" 'Stanguey asked as they sat over a chart in the darkened chart-house. "Where can we hide and watch this coast, day and night?"

"Well," said Dummy, "here's a little island off Bass

Rocks. It's right in the cove, and close to shore, but I can con her in there in the dark. Island's high and rocky, so we can put a lookout up in the scrub atop of her. Those destroyers wouldn't dare come in within a mile of it! It's all rocks and lobster buoys. But there's good water, if a fellow knows it."

'Stanguey rang for slow speed ahead. The Eagle-boat nosed her way along-shore, past the lighted windows of millionaires' houses on Eastern Point, past the hotel lights of Bass Rocks.

"Get ready a stern anchor with a new hawse, 'Stanguey," cautioned Dummy. "Goin' to be ticklish, workin' in there with a single-screw boat!"

Just *how* ticklish 'Stanguey realized as the Eagle-boat drifted nearer land. The heavy Atlantic surf pounded on the rocky cliffs, and foamed as it tore at hidden rocks. Dummy was steering by house and hotel lights on shore—he seemed to know their bearings. No large ships ever went in behind that island! It meant court-martial for 'Stanguey with his first ship if he touched anywhere here! But he who feared court-martial would never get anywhere in war. 'Stanguey remembered Nelson putting his telescope to his blind eye, so as not to see the recall signal at Copenhagen, and took heart. That the Navy was no business for timid souls was the great lesson of Nelson's life, as 'Stanguey saw it!

"Let go y're stern anchor!" came Dummy's low hail. The stern anchor dropped and held. The Eagle-boat, with right rudder, swung slowly into the narrow gap between the island and the cliffs ashore. In no other way could she have made that abrupt turn.

"Pay out! Pay! Pay!" yelped Dummy. The hawser ran out, fathom after fathom. She crawled in behind the island until it hid her stern.

"That's well. Let go both bow anchors!"

They rattled out. She was moored, bow and stern, with rocks close aboard on either hand. It was a devilish place for a ship as big as an Eagle-boat to get into! But there was fairway ahead and she could run out through the gap with ease. 'Stanguey called away a boat and took a lookout detail ashore on the island. These established themselves in a bushy nest on the crest and went on watch; but all night long no destroyer fleet passed toward the south. Nothing but a lone patrol boat—and she had no inkling that they were there!

And then, about four in the morning, another danger presented itself. A milk truck came rumbling along on the mainland, and 'Stanguey distinctly heard—"Hey, fellers, pipe the Eagle-boat!" from one of the drivers. "Whaddye know!"

That would never do! By morning the road would be crowded with cars, and all Rockport would be talking about them. The admiral of the Blue could not fail to get wind of him!

"We warp!" said 'Stanguey to himself energetically and ran down to the boat. By sights ashore he noted that, if they could move the Eagle-boat forward into the gap, she would be out of sight of that pesky road. He and Dummy set at it, a feverish and strenuous business, a race against sunrise, hauling in on the stern anchor, kedging forward with the bowers. Both ships' boats toiled demoniacally at it, carrying for-

ward the heavy anchors and dropping them, then coming up with the capstan and hauling her, yard by yard, ahead. They were nearly all dead for sleep by the time it was done; but the ship lay right in the gap now and could not be seen from shore.

'Stanguey kept the watch on all day; nevertheless he was almost certain that the admiral of the Blue, if attacking those two cruisers of the Red in force, would send south his destroyers about nine at night, so as to arrive on George's Banks at two in the morning. And that night, just *about* nine o'clock, he was rewarded! Blinker lights passed at sea. There were no other lights than those, and then only once; but he knew that the column was passing, each with its screened stern light showing. They could not hope to see those, and so count the numbers of destroyers out there, but those blinker signals were enough for 'Stanguey. A flagship was talking out there!

"Think they're safe as can be, up here, eh, Dummy!" he crowed joyously. "Here, Barton!" he said to the yeoman of the watch. "Hustle ashore with this telegram to the commandant at Newport. And take the train down there yourself, while you're about it. You won't have time to get back and rejoin *this* ship!"

"Eh?" Dummy exclaimed delightedly. 'Stanguey went on scribbling the telegram, but his heart was beating fast within him, for he had decided to try the Great Venture next. He waited until the yeoman had gone, then drew Dummy to one side.

"What I want to know is what these here Eagle-boats are *for*—eh?" began Dummy breathlessly, for

he had caught the inkling of a wild hope in 'Stanguey's words and was eager for it himself.

'Stanguey grinned teasingly, "Scout duty, man!" he said. "It's all I have orders for."

"Yes, but," pursued Dummy, "what were these boats designed for in the first place? That's what *I* want to know! Not what the Navy's doing with them. We've got a torpedo!"

"And we're going to play with it some, I'll say!" grinned 'Stanguey. "Only question is, *how* are we going to get into Rockport? . . . That admiral's sent south his destroyer screen; there's nothing there now but the four dreadnoughts . . ." He stopped, out of breath. It was Dummy's turn.

"Can't make it by the breakwater, that's sure!" Dummy said. "They'd have a searchlight on us in no time! But . . . through the Gully . . . it's a rift between the rocks offshore and the Point. What's our torpedo range?"

"Two thousand yards."

"And it's not more'n a quarter-mile from the Point to where those battleships are layin'!" yelped Dummy, wild with excitement. "We pokes our nose around that Point, an' gets one of 'em cold, searchlight or no searchlight!

"Mean water, though!" he added dubiously.

Once more court-martial loomed up before 'Stanguey; this time for "exceeding orders" to boot! But a detached commander was expected to show initiative if the opportunity offered, he reflected, and here was a gorgeous one! "I may be broke for it," said Nelson

at Copenhagen, "and shall probably be hanged; never mind, let them!"

"Let's go!" said 'Stanguey suddenly. "If I can't trust in you, Dummy, what's the use of anything!"

Which was a profound, if ambiguous, remark for any commander to make.

They ran the Eagle-boat out of the gap and nosed along the shore. Deep bays opened out, which made 'Stanguey breathe freer, then rocks and cliffs again. The chart showed these hidden dangers but there was little time to look at it. You had to *know!* Dummy conned her through them as he had steered a lobster launch in his boyhood. 'Stanguey got ready his torpedo. He did not need to fire it; just anchor when in position and wait for daylight. The umpires would call it, then, a direct hit. Of course the Eagle-boat would be, theoretically, blown out of the water after that first torpedo shot.

Slowly the huge granite headland of Rockport loomed up nearer and nearer. The surf on the reef was appalling, white and heavy, the sea fairly quiet but in its restless power gnashing sullenly and forever upon those ragged granite outposts of the land. There did not seem a hole anywhere—a hole for the Eagle-boat to creep through. But Dummy was calm as ice, with his brief—"Left rudder! . . . That's well! . . . Right a bit! . . . Steady! . . . Now *Hard a-port!*" 'Stanguey held his breath as they wallowed through the boiling sea and into a tiny tortuous channel. They missed rocks in it seemingly by inches.

And then they were through, and the Eagle-boat,

black as death, drifted along under the headland not fifty feet from the surf that lashed hollowly against it. The big wide anchorage of Rockport opened up around the Point. Dim under the stars were the mighty hulls of the four Blue dreadnoughts, protected by the noisy breakwater a mile out to sea. 'Stanguey winked twice with his flasher from the bridge for the first to let go anchor; then turned to wring Dummy's hand deliriously. They were dead in position for a direct hit on the nearest dreadnought!

For a moment they capered and punched each other hilariously; then 'Stanguey found his voice. "Guardship! And she's only one searchlight going, and that looking out to sea!" he cried. "Gad, but they think they're safe!"

The searchlight went out, after a time, without finding them. It was evidently a perfunctory thing—routine, general orders. Might go on again in half an hour. And, sooner or later, they would turn it on this point . . .

"Might as well put a plaster on her!" observed 'Stanguey when deep darkness had settled over everything again. "We've got some."

"How?" asked Dummy.

"Shinplaster. Clinches any doubt the umpire might have to-morrow. We paste it on her side. Come on!"

Noiselessly, and with muffled oars, they lowered a boat and put off. 'Stanguey circled widely to approach the nearest dreadnought bows on, so that its wide flare would conceal them utterly from the marine sen-

tries. High over them like a house the steel monster towered. They passed the small boat slowly by hand along her sides, stopped to glue on a big round white "plaster," then glided under her stern. It was light enough to make out her name, and 'Stanguey looked eagerly for the great gold letters. There they were, all gleaming—M-O-N-T-A-N-A!

Montana! 'Stanguey's heart stopped. He had "plastered" his father's ship! For one torturing moment he thought of going back and taking off that patch. The glue was still wet. He could plaster one of the other dreadnoughts. But no, that would not do. The *Montana* was the nearest to the Eagle-boat, and the farthest out. The umpire would designate her as the victim, anyhow. And Captain Brooke would be the first to condemn, himself, any sentimental leniency to an enemy in war. . . . No, it had to be; though 'Stanguey's heart ached for the terrible awakening that must come to Captain Brooke, commander of the dreadnought *Montana*—and his father.

Then a mischievous thought—why not go aboard, wake up Wally Radnor, and dumbfound him with the news? That would be putting one over on the rising young gunnery officer, with his pride in and reliance upon great-gun fire. A triumph sweet to the soul! And easy to do.

They moved the boat forward again to the gangway and heard immediately the sentry's ringing "Boat ahoy!"

"Aye, aye!" called up 'Stanguey, the hail that a commissioned officer was coming alongside, but of low rank.

He went up the steps and was met by a young junior deck officer whom he did not know.

"Private and unofficial," said 'Stanguey. "Is Ensign Radnor aboard?"

"Yes, but he's off watch and asleep," replied the Deck Officer. "Anything I can do?"

"It's rather important," said 'Stanguey. "May I go forward? Had to get out here, somehow, at midnight, to see the old cuss!"

"Sure!" laughed the D. O. agreeably. "Hope he doesn't beat you up!"

'Stanguey laughed and went forward to the wardroom country. Down a ladder and into the steerage, then for Wally's cabin. He unhooked its door, closed it, and turned on the electric. Wally lay sleeping like some big and shock-headed cherub. 'Stanguey grinned and began shaking him, steadily and untiringly.

The sleeper sighed, tried to strike away this thing that was bothering him; presently his brown eyes opened and he blinked at 'Stanguey sleepily. And then came the sudden rush of recognition and all that it meant, and he was out of the berth with a yell:

"Good Lord, 'Stanguey! What you doin' here?" he shouted.

"Hush, angel!" 'Stanguey admonished severely. "You're in Heaven, y'know—and so am I. Your old tin pot went to the bottom an hour ago! Gotta be nice, y'know, now that you've sprouted wings."

Wally collapsed. "Torped?" he asked.

"Yep. By an Eagle-boat. Mine—that's what they're supposed to be *for,* old thing!" said 'Stanguey cheerfully. "Didn't know we Reds *had* one, did you? Or just

laughed it off if you did, eh?" he rubbed it in. "Well, get that gunnery eye of yours out of the porthole and you'll *see* her, boot!"

"Ye gods!" gasped Wally, peering. "You are right! Sold!"

The depths of degradation claimed him for a moment, but presently like a game sport he was on a rising key. "You old son-of-a-gun!" he cried admiringly. "Say, ape! Some feather, what?" And then the chums fell upon each other for an old-time rough-house.

After some minutes of that, Wally exclaimed: "Does your father know?"

"Not yet but soon—poor dear!" grinned 'Stanguey shamelessly. "This pays us for the four gold bars and the half stripe, doesn't it? Gloats!"

But Wally's mind was on the other side of the situation. "Then the only merciful thing to do is to tell him, right off!" he said promptly and seriously. "Give him time to get over it, y'know, before the whole ship knows. It'll half kill him, 'Stanguey!"

"Guess that's so!" said 'Stanguey, after a moment's reflection. "Get on something and we'll go."

It was with a very different tread than ever before that 'Stanguey mounted to the saluting deck of the dreadnought *Montana* and presented himself before the marine sentry at the quarters of Captain Norman Brooke, U.S.N.

"Ensign Brooke, of the Red Fleet, to see Captain Brooke!" he announced peremptorily. The sentry tumbled inside in haste, for that "Red Fleet" was no prayer for an interview, but a command! Presently he came out and went in with 'Stanguey under guard,

as an enemy. Captain Brooke sat on the edge of his berth in pajamas, and no uniform but his gold-leaf cap. His eyes were wide awake and troubled.

"I have the honor to report, sir, that you are sunk —half an hour ago, sir!" said 'Stanguey, saluting stiffly.

He had scarcely time to hear Captain Brooke's gasp—"Good heavens, Norman!" when shouts and orders were ringing out from the bridge above, the alarm for General Quarters sounding all over the dreadnought, its gong tapping ceaselessly overhead in the captain's cabin, and the whoop of the battle siren drowning everything. Evidently the searchlight had picked up that hostile Eagle-boat at last!

"It's all too late, sir!" said 'Stanguey through the din. "There's a plaster on you as big as a barrel head." Then, with contrition and filial anxiety breaking through officialdom—"Oh, Father! *Any*one but you! But you were anchored farthest out. I didn't know— but I feel almost as if I had *struck* you. I——"

"Nonsense, Norman!" broke in Captain Brooke bluffly. Then, to the marine, to stop the din—"Sound 'Secure!' "

He clapped his palms together distractedly. "It's pretty awful for me, this! But my—my pride is that it was you, Norm, and not some other man's son. And what with, may I ask?" he demanded truculently and with a revival of hope. "You had not a destroyer in your fleet."

"With an Eagle-boat, Father," said 'Stanguey. "We had one, you know, but the Navy doesn't think enough of them to even try to fight them. So I took a

shot at it. Hid behind an island last night, to avoid your destroyers, and then attacked your dreadnoughts to-night. Couldn't have done a thing without Dummy —Ensign Bickfield. He knows these waters like a sheep knows its pasture. . . . The Eagle-boat's off Rockport Point now."

It wasn't hard to see her! She lay in the searchlight beams, a fine mark for any five-inch; just a high, thin bow, a single signal mast, a slender funnel—but it was all too late to do anything about her.

"An *Eagle*-boat!" breathed Captain Brooke hoarsely, as if the miracle were almost too great to be believed. He kept looking at her out of the porthole as if he expected her, somehow, to vanish as mysteriously as she had come.

"But it's all perfectly good, Norm," he said at length. "You carry an eighteen-foot Sims torpedo, don't you? And a dead hit, at two thousand yards, with any kind of gunnery."

"Yes; and we're within fifteen hundred yards from that point, sir," 'Stanguey pointed out.

"Neat!" exclaimed Captain Brooke with enthusiasm. "Even with every searchlight going, you'd have got us! *Shake,* my boy!"

It was the proudest moment of 'Stanguey's life, that hearty congratulation from the old tiger who commanded a dreadnought!

But he was to have a prouder one. Two weeks later, in an office in Washington, the Chief of Operations was discussing the recent attack and defense of Boston by the Red and Blue Fleets with the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation. "I'd like to lay hands on

about six of those Eagle-boats, if you can spare 'em, Admiral," he was saying.

"And why Eagle-boats, John? They're no good for anything that *I* can discover!" retorted the Bunav.

"Well; mebbe. But I've found a kid, at last, who seems to have *some* glimmerings of what they were originally designed for! I'm referring to young Brooke. Put his dad's dreadnought out of action with one, by as pretty a piece of hide-and-go-seek among rocks as you ever saw! And the Blues lost Boston. Four dreadnoughts against three, off Rockport, as soon as the Reds could get there! So, if you can fix me up a flotilla of the pestilent Eaglets, I'm going to put young Brooke in charge of the lot and send him down to the Guantanamo fleet maneuvers this winter —and we'll see what we'll see."

And that is why his classmates nicknamed Ensign Norman Brooke, Jr., "Admiral" 'Stanguey, henceforth and forever more!

BIG GUNS!

BY WARREN HASTINGS MILLER

"YOUNG man," snapped Captain Norman Brooke, U.S.N., commanding the dreadnought *Montana,* "stand over against that wall and *stay* there, at salute, until you learn to enter a captain's office properly!"

Oh, it was an awful moment!

Midshipman Wally Radnor could have sunk through the floor with embarrassment as Midshipman Norman Brooke, Jr., reporting in all the glory of white uniform, gold buttons, white gloves, sword, and cap, strode over stiffly to that steel wall, hand to visor, face crimson with mortification. Both of them had been assigned to the *Montana* for summer cruise duty, and both were reporting for the first time officially to the captain; but "'Stanguey" Brooke had forgotten that this was not *home,* where one greets one's father in the familiar slang of affection, but on board a mighty dreadnought of thirty-two thousand tons and ten twelve-inch turret guns. And he was being made to realize—too late—that there were four great big gold bars on his father's shoulder straps and only one little half-stripe on his own!

Wally's big heart was genuinely distressed over this stern family incident. He had hoped to collect a new

friend in 'Stanguey, even though Brooke was an upperclassman, but there was not a hope now! That familiar, "Hello, Dad! How's everything?" of 'Stanguey's as they entered; the stern frowning silence of the old tiger at the desk; then that stormy command!

Captain Brooke had been perfectly right, of course; it was 'Stanguey who had forgotten the iron discipline of the Navy, even when reporting officially to one's own father. But it was human nature to take it out on the unfortunate witness of such humiliation, and Wally sensed already a hostile attitude in 'Stanguey, the beau ideal of his own class, standing there under official reprimand. What aristocrats those two were! he felt with a furtive admiration—rigid in the punctilios of etiquette, equally rigid in exacting absolute efficiency in all that they did. 'Stanguey's were the features of a young Viking—and a very red-faced one just now—tall, tow-haired, long-nosed, suggestive of fighting power and will, aloof, aristocratic. His father sat at the steel desk, a senior edition of him, only iron-gray and immensely more formidable as Wally looked down at him, still at salute.

The captain returned it. "Any preferences as to duty?"

"Gunnery, sir," said Wally bashfully.

He watched Captain Brooke's pen endorsing his orders. Awe thrilled him as his imagination led him to reflect that this man represented one sixteenth of the fighting strength of the whole United States at sea. He held this dreadnought, this mighty engine of smoke and steel, in the hollow of his hand. Wally realized that with youthful hero-worship as he watched. And

then his heart gave a throb of joy as the magic word "gunnery" scratched out under the moving pen.

"Take these to my yeoman. Report to Commander McCracken for duty," said Captain Brooke briefly, handing him back the Bureau of Navigation letter that was Wally's excuse for existence. He still ignored his son, standing there mute and humiliated against the wall.

Wally saluted and hastened out the minute his salute was returned. He was glad to be spared further embarrassment in this family matter.

Also he had not dared hope for more than to be assigned to the first lieutenant, who is the housekeeper of the ship, where he would be busy at "field days" cleaning up, anchoring, and getting under way. But now to be actually *in* the firing—Whoops!

At a casual glance, Wally's face would have gotten him no more than some very minor duty. A plain, democratic face, covered with freckles, with nothing whatever to distinguish it save its winning air of friendliness; a big, heavy body that had won him the Annapolis "A" as varsity left tackle; hands like hams, feet to match—yet Wally had a way of collecting friends as a dog does burs. 'Stanguey was cliquey, aloof, star on four different varsity teams, and had a dozen accomplishments besides. Wally had only one accomplishment aside from a faculty of making friends all up and down the Academy classes and even outside, among the common sailors and including an admiral or two—for there are no limits to the range of a big heart. He could make a noise like a squeaking rat.

When the class was rough-housing, and a babel of barks, mews, cow-moos, and lion-roars arose, that rat-squeak of Wally's was always there, so apt and unmistakable that everyone stopped to laugh and punch him.

'Stanguey came into the steerage mess shortly after Wally had returned there from his interview with Commander McCracken. He was serene again, now, whatever had been the scene with his father in private, but his eyes were cold as he walked up to Wally.

"You stole my job, oaf, see?" he laughed banteringly, " 's war! And I bet I got yours! I'm assigned to our fat First."

He was grinning, but his eyes didn't smile. There was a cold glitter in them that told Wally there was plenty of truth in the jest that milord 'Stanguey was not pleased.

Wally grinned back.

"Lay off! Think the captain doesn't know a jelly-bean when he sees one, huh?" he growled in the thick voice of ferocity he always used when least angry. "You want to bone skinny (math), boot, if you're goin' to get gunnery in this man's navy!"

"Out—plebe!" said 'Stanguey majestically, waving on two more midshipmen assigned to the *Montana*. They laid hands on the six feet of Wally, and there was rough-house all over the steerage until an ensign arose in the might of his one stripe and quashed them.

That helped some, but it did not entirely restore friendly relations. Wally's sunny heart was sore troubled. He had seen too many classmates throw friends carelessly away, for jealousy, for prejudice, for a

whispered word unproved, for nothing at all but some fancied slight—as if a friend were not worth any more than a good baseball!

All this was so unnecessary, for 'Stanguey was a fine fellow, once you got under his skin. But the only way now to win that aristocrat's friendship was to show him something better than his own best. 'Stanguey's type despised a fellow who was merely good-hearted. You had to be up on your toes, all the time, as they were. Well, now was the chance to show him; for all the ship was on edge over the morrow's battle practice. Wardroom, steerage, and crew's messes, talked of nothing else. And they had but one slogan —"Smear the *Alaska!*"

The fourteen-inch gun ships were out of it, for they shot farther and flatter; but in the twelve-inch division these two were the big rivals for gunnery honors. One of them would get the Efficiency E tomorrow! They were alike as two cutters, both with five turrets and ten five-inch rifles in the secondary, which was the Steerage's own battery. Every shot of the *Alaska's* practice of the day before, when the *Montana* had towed the target raft, was being talked over from every angle. It would take 86 per cent. to beat her; but, as the *Montana* was flagship of the division and had a rear admiral on board, it was up to the honor of the ship to do that little thing for him!

Eight o'clock and "general quarters" was ringing throughout the ship! The morning had broken bright and fair, and the fleet was on its way to the battle grounds. The continuous *tap-tap-tap* of gongs on wardroom and steerage ceilings, in the captain's and

admiral's quarters, throughout the crew's decks and the marines' country, was calling the *Montana* to action stations. Bugles flourished somewhere up on deck, bulkhead doors were clanging shut, fire hose being run out, ventilator cowls coming down clearing ship for action, as Wally pushed his way along the corridors through the crowd of hurrying seamen, each on his way to his battle station. He hastened up the ladder to the saluting deck, then ran around the captain's quarters and up a curving iron staircase into the forward basket mast. All the ship below him swarmed with hurrying figures; signal flags passed him on their way up to the halyards; a spotting lieutenant brushed by him to scurry up the narrow ladder to the foretop, high above. Wally climbed up into a platform halfway up the mast, the secondary gunfire control of the ship, and reported to Commander Brett, the assistant gunnery officer.

That gentleman was busy, for red and white ready-lights were winking and flashing all around him, buzzers sounding—all sorts of mysterious noises and gun-lights, each of which meant something. Brett's cap was on with the vizor backward, a pair of telephone receivers clamped over his ears; a mouthpiece on a switchboard hung around his neck by a strap. He nodded curtly to Wally.

"You run the is-was, Radnor," he directed, handing Wally a wooden board marked with curved lines and cryptic figures. "Officially it's known as the gunfire conversion table, but we call it the 'is-was'—you'll find out why, soon! Ensign Howe will be up directly. He gives you the advance ranges from plot, see? I give

you the spot and target bearings; you run down the tables from each corner on the is-was and read him the corrections—get it?"

Wally didn't, but he had glimmerings of it, for he was quick at figures. He traced the two data columns on the board. They met in curved lines which read figures valuable somehow to the sight-setters at the guns, he grasped.

"Yes, sir," he said.

"All right!" came back Commander Brett briskly. "Try it—range 5040; spot, down 200! bearing, 195; what's the correction?"

Wally ran a big finger down one column, meeting it with a pudgy thumb crossing the board. He read out a string of numbers.

"C'rect!" said Brett, glancing over his shoulder. "You'll do. Now where the devil is Howe?"

He broke off the telephone orders to the battery, for the signal, "Coming on the range!" had reached him.

"Coming on the range!" he repeated to the battery. "Load ammunition hoists! Test out the bells and buzzers!"

Wally took the respite to look out over the sea. About two miles off the *Alaska* was steaming along the horizon, towing the target raft some five hundred yards behind her. Five gray targets with square black bulls' eye were strung between the raft masts. Wally guessed from the activities up here that the five-inch were to fire first, after which the targets would be changed and the five turrets of the twelve-inch go after them.

"Officer's call! Test primers and firing circuits!" ordered Brett through his breast telephone. "Here, Radnor—can't wait for Howe! You put on his telephone receivers and give me the ranges from plot."

Wally took them from the sailor in attendance and immediately heard a strange voice calling—"Range 7250—range 7250!" It thrilled him to realize what a mighty fighting machine a battleship is, and to be part of that machine himself for the first time. That voice was from plot, 'way down in the bowels of the ship, where officers and men were calculating the advance ranges from instruments whose factors were the distance and speed and course of the enemy ship. It would not do to fire directly *at* her; the amount to set the sights in advance must be figured, so as to strike her with the shell at whatever speed and course she was going.

"What's the matter up there? Why don't you answer?" came up a wrathful voice.

"All right, sir—I'm here," quavered Wally, not knowing what else to say.

"For cat's sake! Is this you, Howe?"

It was evidently a lieutenant talking, and he was objecting strenuously to this break in the team play.

"No, sir," began Wally, but the lieutenant in charge of plot cut him short savagely, "Range 7190! Repeat that to Brett, whoever you are—and to the battery—*twice!*"

Wally sang it out as if stung. Five different voices answered him from the ensigns in charge of five different guns. He was very much part of this big team, he realized! Also events were hurrying along just about

as fast as the *Montana's* screws were driving them into battle range!

"Powder flag! Load port Number One five-inch!" he heard Brett's voice dully beyond his telephone receivers. Still no sign of Ensign Howe coming up through the hatch into the upper fire control! They had about three minutes left before "Commence firing!"

Commander Brett lifted one of Wally's telephone "ears."

"You'll have to run the conversion board, too, youngster," he said worriedly. "It can be done, if you keep your head. I'll give you the spots and bearings through this ear. No! Here comes someone!"

He dropped the little receiver on its spring clamp and looked around. It was not Ensign Howe, but 'Stanguey Brooke who was reporting.

Brett swept the receivers off Wally's ears.

"Which of you two ranks the other?" he asked hurriedly, for there was now less than two minutes before they would be on the range.

'Stanguey nodded, "I, sir!" He smiled that grim and capable smile of his.

"All right. Take the range telephone. Radnor, man the conversion board—ready?"

"Range 7010—range 7010!" sang out 'Stanguey as if born to it.

"Commence firing!" yelled the A. G. O.

Instantly—*braanngg!* roared out the port Number One five-inch, directly below them. A long flame of orange spiralling and curling, a huge burst of black smoke, the whistle of a shell. Then a tall white shell-

spout rose beyond the first target, followed by a distant *Ong-ong-ong-ong!* and two more spouts on the far horizon as the shell ricocheted.

"Spot, over, down 100! Bearing 227!" snapped Commander Brett; and "Range 6990—range 6990!" sang out 'Stanguey. Wally felt as bewildered as if attacked by two terriers at once. He hastily ran the figures down the is-was columns and barely managed to yelp out, "Deflection 4.9 left, correction 225846!" when *braangg!* went the gun again. "Is-was" was right! That was precisely how he felt!

"Snap it up! Quicker with those figures!" Brett was scolding in the three seconds it took the shell to travel out there.

'Stanguey looked on him with eyes cold, calm, and cruel. He was giving him the advance range; no more. Officially that was his sole duty. If funny-face went down, all right!

Wally waited for the shell-spot, on his toes. The deflection depended on the small change of bearing of the target; the range on the shell-spot. Both were up to him on the pestiferous is-was, figured by lightning mental arithmetic.

This time they both barked together. Wally caught a jumble of "Spot, down *two* hundred, 100 left. Bearing 220!" and from 'Stanguey 69-something-or-other. He looked mute appeal to 'Stanguey to repeat that range, but got nothing save a grim smile and the hard gleam of the eyes which said, "It's up to you, boot! These things are orders, you know, and only given once in this man's navy!"

"Deflection 4.7, right!" Wally gasped desperately.

He had guessed at that range-change, applied the spot correction, and run down the bearing change only just in time to catch the gun. It roared out, terrifying not only in its savage report but also in its hint that this was war and that many intensely alert minds were keyed up all over the ship, all in one big team, solely that this gun should make a hit. That sight-setter below must have done his work in less than half a second after receiving his correction! Wally did not want to be the dumbbell in all this. Of all teams in the world, the navy gun-team was the fastest and snappiest. It *had* to be! The gun itself had but three minutes to load, aim, and fire its six shots, and the team comprised not only the seventeen men working it but the officer in charge of it, themselves up here in fire control, and those down in plot. Every single man in that chain had to do his part instantly—and *right!* Wally felt, ruefully, that if he didn't watch himself, he would be the link in the chain to break—had broken once, already, in not catching that range!

"Spot, *two hundred, left!* Bearing, 195!" snorted the A. G. O. "Something wrong with your figures, youngster!" His eyes flashed menacingly. There was a gritting noise in the receivers clamped over his ears. Evidently the spotting officer up in the masthead was telling him something more, and it was not agreeable! Wally himself had seen that shell-spout far to the left. It was high time to collect himself, bar out all panic, and use his *brains* in connection with that cryptic is-was in his hands! He was supposed to know all about it, theoretically, from books studied at the Academy.

"Range 6850—range 6850!" jabbed 'Stanguey at him, his voice sardonic and harsh as steel.

Wally stiffened resolutely as he ran down the columns and curves. "Deflection 4.2, *right!*" he growled in that rough voice of mock-ferocity which told the initiated that old Wally was on the job once more. "Correction 225732!"

The ear-splitting boom of the gun at its fourth shot filled all the air below them with flame and smoke. A breathless, peering silence; then a shell-spout so close behind the target they could only see its top. The three in fire control executed a war dance. They did not *have* to hear from the spotting to know it was a bull's eye!

"Spot 50, center! Bearing 190!" exulted the commander's voice. "No change!—Rapid fire!"

"Range 680—range 680!" sang out 'Stanguey.

Wally looked at them both happily and made his rat-squeak as the commander's hand fell on his board, telling him there was nothing more for him to do. The gun below crashed out in its fifth and sixth shots so rapidly that the second shell was already on its way before they saw the shell-spout of the first—again in a center shot. Commander Brett's eyes were glued to his binoculars, scrutinizing the target.

"Three hits," he announced. "One good miss over; two wild—rotten!"

He faced them angrily. "Now you two!" he began his tirade. "That gun has a score of fifty, and this ship wants eighty-six or better, understand! There's something up between you, and I don't know or care what it is—but forget it! This is team play, see? For cat's

sake drop anything personal here, and give the ship a chance! Brooke, I saw you deliberately refuse to repeat that range, when anyone could see that Radnor needed it. It's all right, of course—regulations and all that—but we are to fight this ship! Get me? Now ——"

The yeoman of the fire control was attracting his attention. "Conning tower talking, sir," he announced.

Commander Brett switched the 'phone board on his breast to connect him with the gunnery officer down below them in the conning tower.

"Yes, sir—very good, sir!" they heard him reply, after a listening moment. "Now, then, boys! Here's where you show the stuff you're made of!" he told the two midshipmen. "The umpires have handed us two casualties. Your 'phone connection is shot away, Brooke; and two ensigns are out down below. That means they've got to double up, down there, and you two have to clear out of here on the double and report to the division officer of the battery. McCracken's going to fire the broadside in salvo to catch up and he wants *hits per gun per minute!* It's our only chance now to beat the *Alaska*. That means you, Radnor! The quicker you hop on their deflection, the sooner we can let go rapid fire!"

Wally tucked the conversion board under his arm and both of them tumbled below with all speed. The "casualty" was one of those delightful things that umpires have a way of handing a ship—just as in actual battle. 'Stanguey's 'phone was out of business, so he would have to take the ranges from plot down at the battery itself. It would be fast and furious work, with

all four of the remaining guns firing in salvo; and "hits per gun per minute" meant rapid fire as soon as he could get the first center shot. Wally hoped that the *Alaska* would not try to put over anything additional like changing the speed of that target raft! They had her deflection down fine now, but it was quite like the *Alaska* to work in on them a change of speed—just as in actual battle. All right, of course—but Heaven help the poor ape in charge of the is-was!

They reported to the division officer, a grim, silent, and nervous senior lieutenant. He handed 'Stanguey a steel clip with two telephone ear-boxes.

"Snap into this quick, youngster; you've got just forty-five seconds before we commence firing. You, there, with the conversion board, stand by me! Take the cotton out of your ears if you have 'em plugged."

Wally took his station and glanced down the long line of guns. Their crews stood at stations around them, tense, silent, on their toes. The hoarse bellow of the *Montana's* whistle grunted out somewhere far above, and there was a movement of tensity in the two remaining ensigns, each looking after two guns. The division officer stood adjusting the receivers connecting him with Commander Brett alone up in the fire control, his eyes glancing rapidly up and down the line of his crews.

"Commence firing!" he yelled.

Like the instant snap of a steel spring, seventy men moved as one. A terrific salvo of the four five-inch at close quarters deafened Wally's ears, set his head ringing, filled the air with violent blasts, dimmed all vision in a thick brown murk shot through with yellow

flames. Four great guns recoiled, breeches swung open, shells and powder bags flashed into them.

"Bearing 210—never mind the spot!" shouted the division officer into Wally's ears, and at the same time a thin voice yelling, "Range 6900—range 6900," came to him from 'Stanguey. Wally knew from that instantly two things: the *Alaska* had changed *both* her course and her speed! Rapidly he worked the is-was —and was not surprised at the result.

"Deflection—*five!*—correction 22689!" he shouted at the division officer, who had lifted one receiver to hear it.

"Good-night! Pass that hail!"

The whole gun deck was ringing with shouts and the sight-setters were leaping to the quadrants and deflection drums on the guns. Four enormous blasts thundered forth, shaking the deck under foot, fluttering as in a gale everything that wind could move. Wally saw a rope, hanging in a bight near 'Stanguey, jump and writhe like a live snake, but he himself had to hold fast to the precious conversion board, lest it be blown out of his hands entirely. The four shell-spouts of the first salvo were already rising out of the sea, all short and wild. The *Alaska* had put one over on them neatly! Well, it was all fair. If that were an enemy ship!

"Get this one *right,* if you want to live, youngster!" gritted the division officer's voice in his ear. "Bearing 215. That means we are going faster than she is. Watch your deflection!"

"Range 6950—range 6950!" came from 'Stanguey.

"Pretty good, that last!" yelled the division officer

from under his binoculars, "two hits, two close rights! Spot, up 100!" He had been watching the shell-spouts, and had also got his first word from the fore-top.

"Deflection 4.9, right!" yelled Wally. "Correction 226500!"

The four guns crashed out again, a withering blast that added to the deep murk already filling the gun deck. Through it Wally saw dimly that rope, whipping about again like a tortured thing. This time it had lashed across 'Stanguey's tall topknot, sweeping cap and receiver-clamp from his head, and, added to the vicious force of the blast, hurling him over backward and completely off his balance. The tall midshipman crashed down, his head striking a steel pipe cover. He lay stunned and groaning. Wally leaped to help him—but this was battle and there was only one thing valuable about 'Stanguey Brooke, now—those telephone receivers! He groped for them in the murk and jumped back to his station, adjusting them over his own head, for the guns had already recoiled to battery, had been reloaded, and were waiting for the next sight correction.

Wally found himself in a bewildering world, one next to impossible to keep one's head in! He was doing two men's work now; plot roaring up ranges at him, the division officer shouting spots and bearings, the infernal is-was a maze of figures hard to see in the murk and dancing as if bewitched before his eyes.

"Range 6910! Deflection 4.9. Correction 225750!" he managed to shout out from the maze of confusing information attacking him from all sides. The guns exploded all together, one huge and appalling crash

that swept men off their feet, took one's head off with the intensity of their blast. What an amazing, devastating force was this that men let loose! He heard the division officer yelling—"Good! *Rapid fire!*" and then felt himself fairly lifted from the deck by the rapid crashes of thunder and lightning all around him. All the world was black murk, lit up with vast orange flashes; blasts terrific and scorching blew him this way and that; all his body felt numb, stunned. It seemed impossible that men could keep their heads and work here, but he could dimly see figures moving like clockwork, shells flashing, powder bags passing from man to man, breeches swinging open and shut, the sharp yelp of "Bore clear!" ringing out from one gun or the other.

The division officer was standing with his fingers in his ears and trying to watch two guns at once, the two ensigns moving like animated statues directing their fire, helping here and there with a sharp yell of command . . . a final, stunning, quadruple crash . . .

Then it was all over, and a whole company of men were jumping frantically about, punching each other with delight, wringing the hands of the gun pointers and gun trainers, whooping and yelling like crazy Indians.

"Not bad, youngster!" The division officer was smiling at him grimly and wringing his own hand.

"Did *I* do anything?" asked Wally bewilderedly. It seemed impossible that *he* had counted anywhere in this vast and complicated team play!

"Nothing at all!" laughed the D. O. excitedly. "Only smacked 'em right in the eye—seventeen hits

out of twenty-four shots—*and* with the range telephone to bother with, too! You must have a castiron headpiece on you, kid!"

Wally's rat-squeak was the most appropriate cheer he could think of. "*Please* can the hee-ro stuff, sir!" he protested, for the lieutenant did not seem inclined to let go his hand.

"We're all hee-roes," grinned the lieutenant. "If the twelves do as well we'll smear the *Alaska* yet! And you'll never live it down, youngster, that you ran *both* the ranges and the is-was in this, here, now, battle emergency!" he joked. "Either you guessed it right, or you figured it right—*I* don't know——"

Wally went forward to the steerage as soon as he could get away, for he learned that 'Stanguey had been carried there, feet first.

He found the upper classman in his berth, a cold towel about his head. The long and ruddy face was still white and grimy with powder smoke, but the cold gray eyes were looking out at him unconquered and still somewhat hostile.

"Well, we smeared 'em, boot!" began Wally with his usual intolerant ferocity of voice. "Seventeen out of twenty-four; which, at rapid fire and corrected for hits per gun per minute, figures out more than 87 per cent. Put that in your ear, big boy!"

"Yeow!" cheered 'Stanguey feebly. "Who ran the ranges, after that rope killed me dead?"

"I, your uncle; me, queer-feller, did that little thing, son!" Wally told him unblushingly.

"You . . . Stole me job again—*oaf!*" grinned 'Stanguey, but his eyes smiled, too, this time. "I sure

thought we were through, when all those stars knocked me out into fadeawayville!"

The enormous shout of the battle siren drowned all further talk. It yelped, squawked, ki-yied, hooted in prodigious hoots that were devastating to eardrums already numb with gunfire. The *Montana* was celebrating, in her own ribald fashion. But she had an admiral on board and could do things that other ships couldn't. That admiral was evidently happy!

"That means the umpires have given us Efficiency E for the five-inch, ape!" said 'Stanguey when the siren would let him talk. "And *you* did it, when you come right down to it—*durn* ye!"

He beamed as he held out a long, fine, and very friendly hand. Wally grasped it in his strong paw. That 'Stanguey had been supercilious, mean, unjust, bullying, toward him, for no cause whatever, was nothing, literally nothing—one of those things that we forget and forgive.

"Aw!" he protested. "Here now! No funny business, see? And you want to keep clear of ropes and pipe lines 's afternoon, gob, when we shoot the starboard string, or I'll wear you out, boot, I'll wear you out!"

'Stanguey rose from his berth, fingering a lean bicep and shaking at Wally a corded forearm with a knotted fist on the end of it.

"You wait, boot!" he grinned prophetically. "Let's go up and watch the twelve-inch smear 'em. I feel better now!"

IRISH HURRICANE

BY RALPH R. PERRY

BELOW decks it was too hot to sleep. The heat of the tropics and the oppressive sultriness of the doldrums were intensified by the confined, narrow space of the *Wanderer's* fo'c'sle until the single oil light hung from a deck beam near the hatchway smoked and burned bluishly; until the close air reeked of smoked-out pipes, oil-skins, damp clothes, and the presence of too many men. The crew tossed and muttered, too uncomfortable to lie still.

They were tired. They had been on watch until midnight and would go to work again at four. The sound of three bells, just struck, meant that an hour and a half of their scanty time below was gone. On deck it would be cooler—but not a sailor of them had so much as stood beneath the open hatch. Aboard most ships, or even on the *Wanderer* during the early part of the voyage, the watch off duty would not have gone below at all on such a night. They would have curled up on the bare deck planks in corners where they would have been out of the way, and slept in comfort. But as it was —on deck Frankel was the mate in charge. Better to swelter than to fall afoul of *him*.

This Marty Vade knew. Had he been disposed to forget, there was a purple bruise across his side to remind him. It hurt when he drew a deep breath.

Three days before, while steering, he had let the *Wanderer* luff. Only a little—he had checked her almost before the jib commenced to shiver, but Frankel had snatched up the end of the spanker sheet and lashed him across the ribs. Marty's lapse was quite accidental. It is against the law to strike a man at the wheel. Much Frankel had cared. He grinned with sour malice when Marty went white from the pain of the blow, and swaggered away forward, a black eyebrow cocked up over his left eye in a way he had when he was particularly well pleased with himself, his big bony fists swinging at the end of his long, thin arms.

Marty could not leave the wheel. To give a bucko his due, Frankel would not have cared if he had. The lean, big-boned, bitter-tempered mate feared no man. From Baltimore to Buenos Aires, and now back almost to the equator, he had amused himself by hazing the crew until they were ready for murder, and then daring them to gang him. True, there was a certain justice in his dealings, but it was a hard-bitten, merciless justice that tolerated not the slightest slip. It made sullen enemies. Frankel risked a belaying pin from aloft every time he stepped on deck at night, and only drove the crew harder because he knew it. In his eyes Marty was a slender kid, the least dangerous man in the crew—but Frankel allowed no one on deck at night who had no business there.

Nevertheless, as three bells sounded, Marty swung his legs out of his bunk and pulled on a pair of white duck trousers in one motion.

"Come back—that blisterin' bucko'll bash yer head in!" warned a sailor in a strident whisper, but Marty

could endure the heat and the foul air no longer. Before a hand could stop him he was up the ladder and across the deck to the shelter of the weather rail, where the deep shadow of the bulwark and the foresail combined to conceal him. His first thought was to locate the mate, and in a moment, when his eyes became accustomed to the darkness, he saw Frankel standing on the cabin deck house. The mate's figure was thrown into relief by the white expanse of the spanker. The width and squareness of his shoulders were unmistakable. He stood near the wheel, within fifteen feet of the end of the great eight-foot spanker boom that extended out behind him, and to judge from the poise of his head, he seemed to be trying to guess from what direction the next puff of breeze would come.

For him to see Marty was impossible—and within a second Marty forgot that he himself ran a risk in being on deck. Behind the mate's back the man at the wheel was taking greater chances—for what purpose Marty could not fathom.

Russian John had the wheel. The bandage around his head identified him. Frankel had knocked him down that morning. In falling, Russian John had cut his head on a ringbolt, and had later bound it with a bit of old sailcloth. Now, instead of steering, he was stealthily slipping the wheel into the becket. Furtively, inch by inch, watching Frankel every instant, he was tiptoeing away from the wheel. From his expression, dimly visible in the faint light cast by the binnacle, from the way he moved, it looked to Marty as though he were about to attack the mate. His attitude was

that of a man about to snatch up a club and spring on an enemy from behind; but instead of moving toward the mate he was moving away from him. With infinite caution he stooped and busied himself for a moment with something on deck.

"Cast loose the sheet of the spanker, looks like," Marty whispered to himself. "What for—ain't a breath o' breeze stirring."

Russian John was back at the wheel again, quick and silent as a ghost, but the spanker hung limp, and the long spanker boom was motionless. If the sheet had been let go, the friction of the sheet in the blocks was enough to hold it. The night had fallen breathlessly calm and dark as a pocket. Low clouds had blotted out the stars; far off on the starboard bow a thunderstorm was gathering. From it came a flicker of lightning now and then; the single, flat, echoless *boom* of thunder at sea. The hope that the *Wanderer* might catch a bit of wind from this distant squall had brought Frankel to the starboard rail, but now he turned back in disgust.

"Goin' round us—ye c'd put the wind we'll git in yer pipe!" he growled, mostly to himself, before he raised his voice and taunted the man at the wheel. "You, John—don't gimme none o' yer Finn tricks. Whistle me a wind, ye warlock—ye can if ye like!" The big mate was half in earnest. It is a sea superstition that all Finns, if they choose, can sell themselves to the devil in return for control over the winds. Bitterly as the Finns deny it, they are liable to receive abuse when there are long-continued contrary winds. Russian John's answer, therefore, was a surprise.

"Ay'll whustle a wind—more as you want," he hinted darkly.

The mate laughed, in a way that made the sound of a threat far more sinister than the Finn's words.

"See we git it over the starboard quarter," Frankel commanded. "I smell a breeze comin'—starbo'd yer helm."

"She don' mak steerageway," the Finn grumbled.

Frankel looked down at the water suspiciously, and Marty, able to see what was going on behind the mate's back, started. For it was a lie; Russian John proved it when he gave the wheel a spoke—not to starboard, but to port. Frankel looked over the rail, leaning from the extreme edge of the cabin deck house; but with the sea glassy calm and no stars showing, it was impossible for him to be sure whether the ship was moving through the water or not. Before he could decide, the puff of wind struck them.

It was a gentle puff. What happened in the next few seconds fascinated Marty, holding his muscles motionless and paralyzing his tongue, because it was all so slow, and yet so inexorably ruthless. Thanks to John's twist of the wheel, the cat's-paw struck the ship not on the starboard but on the *port* quarter. The spanker flapped, and the eight-foot boom creaked across the top of the cabin toward the mate. There was not two feet clearance; not room to duck beneath unless a man acted instantly, and Frankel did nothing more than look up. He knew the sheet had been hauled flat aft. It would stop before it reached him.

But it did not. The heavy spar struck against his knees. He fell into the bight of the sail and was car-

ried gently across the rail, and dropped off gently into the water.

Apparently stunned by surprise or terror, he did not cry out. Marty heard the splash when he struck the water, the frantic thrashing of a man who cannot swim, and then the breeze filled the *Wanderer's* sails and she sailed on into the darkness. Russian John belayed the spanker and stepped back to the wheel, where he steered on as though nothing had happened. His face was impassive, but in the binnacle light Marty saw his tongue lick once at his lips, like a satisfied cat's.

Frankel might have been a brute; but the thought of him helpless in that black water was more than Marty could endure. There was a life preserver on the taffrail. He found himself running aft toward it.

At the sound of his bare feet on the deck Russian John looked up; as the boy came into the light cast by the binnacle, he grunted and slipped the wheel into the becket. Marty's hand was on the life preserver when the Finn's arm went around his neck from behind and his foot crooked around Marty's ankles.

"W'at you do, hey?" he purred.

"You knocked him over—he's drowning!" Marty gasped, for the elbow pressed against his throat choked him.

"You see!" The Finn's grip on Marty tightened; he half lifted the boy off his feet. "You say no'ding. He beat you, too, hey?" he demanded, abandoning his intention of throwing Marty after the mate. "Good for him to drown, hey?"

"Throw him a life preserver," Marty pleaded. He

had been trying vainly to break loose, but at this, to his surprise, the Finn released him and stepped back with a satisfied grin.

"Da's right—t'row life preserver an' give a yell, hey?" The grin widened. An expression of self-satisfied cunning spread over the Finn's flat face.

"Man overboard!" he bawled at the top of his lungs, and snatched up the life ring. For a moment he held it over his head, grinning, and then hurled it —forward and over the port side—with all his strength. He had hurled it in the direction opposite to that in which the mate disappeared, and it was the only life preserver at hand.

"Da's how we he'p him," the Finn smirked.

From below came sounds of excited voices, hurrying feet. Men were scrambling up the ladder in answer to the Finn's call.

"Dey don' get up here soon 'nough," purred the Finn, and then cried out, "Hey, w'at you do!"

For Marty had jumped on the taffrail—and dived into the sea.

He lit sprawling, for it was too dark to see the water and make a clean dive; and when he rose the ship had already vanished. For a second or two he could hear the gurgling of the water around her rudder; then that died out and he was alone in darkness so complete that he immediately lost all sense of direction. He struck out, swimming as quietly as he could, but he was afraid the mate had already gone down. A splash and a gurgle twenty yards away on the left proved the contrary, and Marty headed toward

the sound with heartfelt relief. He knew he would have to fight the mate, and he dreaded Frankel's strength and ferocity. In the darkness he felt helpless and quite alone. Assistance would be long in coming —as long as the Finn could delay it. But there was a job to do, and though from the start Marty doubted that his strength would be equal to the task he had set himself, he set about it.

He caught Frankel by the collar, knocked aside, by luck, the hand that clutched at his throat, and got the life saver's grip—his arm under Frankel's chin, the palm of his right hand against the big man's ear. Then he began to swim . . .

At first he tried a side stroke, with a scissors kick. The water was warm. Marty soon got rid of his trousers, and the breeze, which sent tiny ripples slapping into his mouth, quickly died away. For what seemed a long time he swam on easily, though he did not know whether he had traversed a quarter of a mile, or only a hundred yards. There was not a light he could see, even when he trod water and raised his head to look.

"Wonder—if I'm going right?" he said aloud. The thought made him miss a stroke. His head went under, and he swallowed a mouthful of bitter sea water that made him cough and strangle. Frankel wore shoes, which Marty could not reach to untie, and his feet kept sinking. With every stroke it was harder to hold the mate's head above water. The boy locked both hands under Frankel's chin and turned on his back, kicking just enough to keep both their faces above water. This was somewhat easier, not much.

" 'M tired," he panted. Once he had heard a famous oarsman say he would have been champion sculler of the world—only, when but a hundred yards from the finish, he had got tired. Marty knew how the man had felt, but he managed to keep his feet kicking. As though to reward him, Frankel coughed and commenced to struggle feebly.

"Be still or I'll duck you," Marty gasped.

"Where's—the boat?" Frankel managed to say.

"I dove over—after you," Marty panted.

At this Frankel groaned and heaved himself out of the water, an act that sent Marty's head beneath the surface and made him struggle with all his failing strength to keep them both from drowning on the spot. He thought his lungs would burst before he had Frankel stretched out on his back again.

"Can't you—swim—a bit?" he choked. If he could only get a few seconds of rest Marty felt he could carry on, but to his consternation the mate only groaned.

"Lemme go!" he whimpered. "We'll only drown anyway—don't see ship," he whispered. "What's the use of fighting when you—can't win?"

In his heart Marty agreed that the mate was half right. He knew, in a queer, impersonal way, much as though he were a third person watching two strangers struggle in a dark sea, that he couldn't go on swimming much longer. He had both admired and feared Frankel's courage, and now he experienced a feeling of disappointment and contempt.

"You're a yellow coward," he said. Frankel took the insult without a word. "And if you won't help, keep

still and let me tow you like a baby," Marty commanded. "So big you know you can lick anybody—that's why you like to fight!"

Frankel groaned.

"If I go under, it's goin' to be *trying,* anyhow!" Marty panted into his ear. "Here, see that, you quitter! They have lit a flare!"

The hard blue flame of a Coston light punctured the darkness, but Frankel only groaned, and Marty had to shut his teeth to keep from following his example. For the light was at least a mile away.

"They'll never find us. Lemme go!" Frankel grunted.

"Shut up!" said Marty. He had never been so tired in his life. He was of no more than average height and strength, and he had begun to swim automatically, on his nerve, just enough to keep their heads afloat. Yet even in his fatigue he chuckled at the way he was bullying the mate. That was fun . . . once he lifted his head. The blue light seemed to be in the bow of a lifeboat . . . still a long way off . . . he swam on . . . and on . . . a darkness more impenetrable than that of the night gathered around him . . .

His next sensation was a yellow glare in his eyes. A hand rough as sanded canvas was rasping his bare chest.

"He's coming round!" said a voice in his ears. The captain's florid moon of a face was bent over his, and something fiery ran down his throat. With a grateful sigh Marty relaxed on the bottom boards of the lifeboat, lying between the feet of the oarsmen.

"Good thing you sung out, Mister," he heard the

captain say to Frankel. "I'd given ye up. Just pulled around to go back to the ship when you piped up, an' there ye were, you yellin' an' being towed like a log an' the kid with his eyes shut swimmin'. He was clean out—unconscious—never batted an eye when we lifted him aboard, but he kep' right on swimmin'. What d'ye know about that, huh?"

"Gritty kid," Frankel remarked. The mate was sitting up, and appeared to be recuperating rapidly, for he had done nothing during Marty's long struggle to keep afloat. "I give up when I hit the water, Captain," he went on. "And afterward—well, it didn't seem to be no use, fighting."

"Yeah, I know. How'd you go overboard?" asked the captain. "Kind of funny. It's blowin' a reg'lar Irish hurricane to-night—straight up an' down the mainmast an' not a breath stirrin' on the sea. Were you sleep walkin', Mister?" The captain's fat red face broke into a grin at his own joke, but not the least hint of a smile was reflected on the mate's lean, dark features.

"Yeah, plenty funny," he answered shortly. "Sleeping? Maybe I was—in a way. An' it wasn't an Irish hurricane, Captain." He paused, and because Marty understood the reason for the grim humor that lay beneath his next remark the boy's eyes snapped open in alarm. "No, not *Irish,*" the mate said. He realized what the Finn had done, then.

"Never heard of a calm at sea bein' called nothing but an Irish hurricane," retorted the skipper. "Well, here's the ship. Can you——"

"I can stand my watch—an' I'll look out for the

kid," said Frankel. "He'll be better on deck where he can get air than in the fo'c'sle. Has Russian John still got the wheel?"

"Four bells struck long ago," the captain answered with a shake of his head. "He's acting as lookout."

"Ah!" said Frankel. There was complete satisfaction in that single word; the mate's big hands opened and shut twice. "Then put the kid on the fo'c'sle head, too. I reckon I got my strength back," Frankel purred.

Marty had to be lifted on deck. Even when he had been deposited on its level planks he found himself scarcely able to walk. He was not only tired—he had been swimming so long that the muscles of his legs faltered when he tried to take a step, and he staggered. Two sailors sprang to help him, and with them at his elbow he was half carried forward. They dried him off with a bit of old, soft sailcloth instead of a towel, brought him dry clothes and a blanket to lie on, and left him alone on the fo'c'sle.

Immediately he relaxed into a stupor, not quite falling asleep, and yet so close to slumber, and so comfortable, that he did not wish to move, or think. Aft, men moved about for some time. The murmur of their voices reached Marty faintly. Frankel, he decided, must be telling his story, and he wondered what account of the accident the mate was giving. Then five bells were struck. One by one the sailors came forward and went below. On the poop Frankel was left alone; near Marty someone coughed, and after straining his eyes into the darkness he made out the head and shoulders of Russian John where the Finn was crouched in the extreme bows of the ship.

Perhaps the sailor knew he had been discovered, perhaps he had only been waiting for the decks to be deserted, but before Marty could call to him he crawled swiftly and stealthily across the deck until his face was within three inches of the boy's.

"W'at you tell him?" he whispered. He barely moved his lips, but the faint sound he made was hoarse with terror and desperation.

"Nothing—you yellow sneak. Think I'd snitch?" said Marty.

"Don' talk so loud. He keel me if he guess. He don' guess, no?"

"I don't know," said Marty. In his heart he thought that Frankel did know, or at least surmised enough of what had occurred to inspire his remark about Finnish hurricanes, and it came to the boy with something of a shock that the mate would probably kill the Finn for the cowardly and murderous assault he had committed. That wouldn't do—though Marty failed to see how he could prevent it.

"You tell—Ay cut your t'roat," growled the Finn. He waved his hand before the boy's eyes, and even in the darkness Marty could see the knife he held—a Swedish knife with a round wooden handle and a pointed four-inch blade of hollow-ground steel. "You see no'ding—hey?"

Marty tried to sit up, but the knife was at his throat. None the less he would have grappled with the Finn, whom fright and suspense had made dangerous as a cornered rat, when from aft sounded the regular *thump, thump* of heavy shoes, walking slowly toward the bow.

"Frankel!" the Finn gulped, and drew back.

The mate was in no hurry. He set down each foot solidly, with a stamp almost, as if he had made up his mind exactly what to do and found pleasure in warning the two in the bow that he was on his way to demand an accounting. Russian John stood erect, and clutched his knife. For a moment he seemed prepared to stand his ground and fight it out where he was, but the sound of the mate's steady, remorseless advance was too much for his nerves. He crouched and began to retreat, step by step, with the mate, until he was stopped by the high bulwark at the bows. Beyond was the bowsprit, but beyond that the sea. There was no escape.

Marty caught hold of the bulwark against which he lay and pulled himself erect. Frankel must have seen the movement. He leaped forward—to stop short when he saw who it was.

"You, huh?" he grunted. "Didn't think y'd be on yer pins." He checked himself abruptly to peer into the shadows at the bow. "Y'u kin lie down, young feller," he added not unkindly. "Reckon I'm kind of a heavyweight to pull out o' ole Big Six. . . . I see what I come for, tryin' to crawl down a knot hole."

The Finn snarled defiance.

"It's got its knife," said the mate contemptuously, but made no move to go forward. "Yeah, didn't look to see me again, did y'u? Ain't too well pleased. 'Swep' overboard by the boom, an' lost'—that was goin' to be your story, hey, John? Would've worked, too, only the kid here had guts enough for two. Sea's warm, John, but wet—an' deep." The mate paused to chuckle.

"You'll learn that, John—you'll see for yourself pretty soon," he threatened, and took a slow step forward.

"No!" Marty cried out, catching him by the shoulder.

The mate easily shook off his hand. "Y' say that just like y'u did when we was in the water," he ejaculated with some surprise. "What's the matter? Ain't he got a knife, an' me nothing but bare hands? Ain't that fair?"

"No!" said Marty.

"Think I'll stand still an' let a man near kill me?" Frankel demanded, speaking half to Mary, half to the sailor crouched in the bows. "I heard the boom swing, but 'twas sheeted home. I knew it wouldn't reach me. He must've cast it loose, an' been waitin' for a puff."

"He won't again," said Marty.

"I'll tell the world he won't!" promised the mate. "Y' called me yellow, kid, in the water. Watch me now."

"You are yellow—that's just it," snapped Marty unexpectedly. "He's as bad scared as you were, and both of you quit! He'll drop his knife and run. You know it, too. You ain't taking any chances, but you're scared, yes, scared to let him be. He won't try anything again if you treat him decent."

"Me scared?" said Frankel. "Not me!" Still he hesitated, thinking over what the boy had said, only to shake his head at last and resume his advance.

"I won't stand for murder—and you're as bad as he was!" Marty warned.

"Sit it, then. It's fair fight," snapped Frankel, and

with the words he lowered his head and rushed forward.

It seemed to be a bull-like rush, as if Frankel were convinced the Finn would throw down his knife and run—it seemed such a rush, but was not. For though the Finn uttered a shrill scream of sheer terror, he sprang from his corner to meet the charging mate on the open deck and swung his knife in a swift overhand stab for the point where neck meets shoulder. The thrust was well timed and murderously aimed, but Frankel stopped short in mid rush and twisted aside with a grunted "Ha!" of triumph. The knife point had ripped a six-inch gash in his shirt, but before the Finn could strike again the mate's long arms were wrapped around him, pinioning his arms helplessly against his side. The Finn jabbed frantically with the knife, but his arms were held at the elbow and it cut only the air behind Frankel's back. The mate gave a second grunt of satisfaction, methodically kicked the Finn's feet from beneath him, and lifted him clear of the deck. He kicked, but Frankel had him halfway to the bulwark and was setting himself to throw him overboard before Marty could move.

There was no time for halfway measures. As swiftly, almost instinctively, as he had run aft and dived, Marty's fingers closed over a belaying pin. He jerked it loose and struck Frankel squarely across the back of his head. The mate went down. With a yell the Finn threw himself across him, the knife rose in the air.

This Marty had not foreseen. He caught the Finn's wrist.

"Quit!" he panted.

With bared teeth the Finn looked up.

"Now Ay make sure," he gritted, and despite all that Marty could do the knife began to move downward. Marty was tired, and at best no match for the Finn. His fingers began to slip on John's sweaty wrist. In a second it would have been over, but at that last second Marty raised his club and struck for a second time, stretching the Finn unconscious across his enemy.

Of the two, Frankel was the first to recover. He sat up, and felt gingerly of the bump on his head. Marty was leaning against the bulwark, panting from his exertions, the belaying pin still gripped in one fist. Frankel recognized him with a wry smile.

"Kid, y'u sure stick to a thing," he grunted.

Marty made no answer. He was uncertain what the other meant.

"Y' can't see when y'u have no chance," the mate went on. "Y' see it through to the end." Impatiently he threw the Finn's form off his legs, and unexpectedly looked up with a wide and friendly grin. His long arm shot out. "Shake!" said Frankel. "I am tough an' y'u ain't, but I own y'u the better man. There'll be no rough stuff between me an' the Finn the rest of this cruise."

"You'll forget about it?" asked Marty.

"Yep," the mate nodded. "I'll call it an Irish hurricane—a gale o' wind straight up an' down the mainmast. She ends where she begins, but boy! wasn't she a twister while she moved!"

THE TARGET OF STORMS

BY C. D. STEWART

"STORM making," thought Seth Woodruff to himself, "I'll not get many seals this week."

From the low yet rocky cliff upon which he stood the boy gazed out over the limitless swell of the Pacific Ocean. Behind him back among the trees was the tiny west coast settlement of Chilcoot, stores, fur trading depot, a salmon cannery, and a small pier for loading spruce lumber, cut on the great flanks of the hills that stretched inland to the rugged, snow-powdered crags of the Olympic Mountains.

"Storm making sure thing," the boy repeated to himself as he tucked an ancient lever-action rifle under his arm and began clambering down the rusty brown rocks. Below where the silken swell fretted sullenly and white against the rock was a deep sheltered crevice in the cliff with a tiny stretch of sand at its head. Resting here was a black-hulled, red-beaked Siwash canoe, paddles aboard, a carved sealing club, oilskins, and a tin case of food. Seth strode directly to the canoe, his flexible Indian moccasins making scarcely a sound. He slid easily out of his dark-plaided lumberman's shirt, picked up the bow of the canoe and shoved it into the narrow cove. The canoe was light, altogether too light for a dugout, wonderfully thinned though they are from the solid cedar logs. The canoe,

though patterned after the Siwash's truly sea-going model, with high flaring bow and sides, was built like a white man's canoe, ribbed, canvas covered, and enamelled so that it would cling to the water no more than the feathers of a sea gull. It was Seth Woodruff's sole luxury, one that paid for itself in the greater number of seals he was able to destroy.

Out on the long swell he shot the light craft, and across the entrance of the harbor that led inland to the settlement. It, too, like the cove, was a narrow haven, large enough for a steamer and deep enough, but an entrance requiring careful navigation by anyone coming in. Tumbled islets of rock extended into the sea to either side and out around one of these the black canoe went.

Here among the rocks the hair seals were wont to play. The state zoölogists, years earlier, had demonstrated that the hair seal slaughtered its own weight in fresh, living salmon every twenty-four hours, preferably biting off the heads only of the fish and leaving the valuable bodies to feed the crabs. So Seth Woodruff, like his father before him, was a professional seal hunter, hired at a steady salary by the cannery owners to shoot seals.

It was by no means easy to gain such a position. First of all, absolute trust of the companies in the one they hired was necessary. Second, the hunter had the hardest type of target to shoot at. The duck hunter has a shotgun; the seal hunter, on account of the size of his quarry and the frequent range, must use a rifle. The land hunter has solid ground to stand upon, he has a large target, the whole of the animal's body

perhaps, to shoot at; the seal hunter has, only too often, a sleek head or a nose. The military marksman shoots over measured ranges and over land; the seal hunter shoots only too often from a swaying boat, over water at a moving seal.

But shooting seals was part of Seth Woodruff's life; he had grown up to it. Even the shiny rifle he carried had been left him by his father. He shot expertly, without effort, as a bird flies, or a seal swims.

Seth's keen gray eyes, already scanning the rocks for seals, suddenly grew quizzical with inward perplexity.

Something, somewhere, in the sea, in the sky, was wrong. What could it be? Alertly Seth shifted his gaze over the shore and the distant Pacific. Everything appeared just as it should appear. Out on Minos Point beyond the ragged rocks to the south of the harbor entrance the big red whistling buoy rode the swell. The steel tower surmounting its red, half-submerged belly rocked easily in tune with the long waves. Yet something was queerly, oddly wrong.

Seth broke out into a little relieved laugh. While the steel tower on the buoy kept tune with the waves the big, automatic brass whistle upon its top should also bellow in tune with the waves. The whistle was silent—the whistle that was a part of Seth's life, that sounded as familiar to him as a tram car does to a city-bred boy.

Up to the red-bellied buoy slid the black canoe. Seth leaped lightly from the swaying boat to the slippery red steel of the buoy. Making his canoe fast with its bow line, he nimbly climbed the fifteen-foot steel tower, up past the great white light that would be auto-

matically turned on at sundown, up to the big brass whistle. The difficulty was plain to see. One of the levers that released the air from the buoy's interior was jammed through a long lack of lubricating oil so that the whistle no longer blew when the waves rocked the tower.

"Just about time," thought Seth. "That lighthouse tender is due in a week or so now. Meanwhile, I'll put a little of my gun oil in this bearing." Ten minutes later the job was done and Seth gave the stiff joint a tap to loosen it up. The roar that ensued from the big whistle scarce two feet from his head almost knocked Seth off the tower into the sea. He fairly scuttled down the tower to relieve his aching ears.

Eighteen hours later the little black canoe came back around the buoy on Minos Point but through an utterly different scene. Angry, gray-backed waves broke crushingly upon the rocks. The buoy, target of ten thousand storms, roared defiance with every roll. Seth Woodruff was paddling hard, and keeping a wary eye upon the ominous waves. In half an hour Minos Point would be impassable to any small open boat. Into the harbor, under the gray, flying clouds, he swung over the toppling crests. Seal hunting was over until the storm worked up to its worst, and passed.

A quarter hour later Seth was walking up the main street of the little town. Out of its single café rushed a frontiersman with grizzled locks.

"By St. Pat, his self, here ye are, Laddie. Yer just in time."

It was Michael Cardigan, an old friend of Seth's and Seth's father.

"Hey, boys," Michael roared out, "come on out. We'll show this young military guy what shooting is now. Get out your pokes, you turkey necks, and we'll make a cleanin'."

A group of men, lumbermen and woodsmen, poured out of the building and surrounded the young seal hunter.

"Why, what on earth's the matter?" queried Seth, scanning the jubilant faces around him.

"Nothin' now, Buddy," roared a voice. "There's a young summer-resort guy in town that has a chest load of shootin' medals on his khaki soldier boy's vest, and he's cleaned up every rifle shot in town at the shooting match. And we thought we had some shots, too. Why, looky, there's Martin Enger, he's the best all-round game shot in the Olympic range and this young military bird beats him all hollow—long-range stuff. But we'll clean him now. We told him we still had a trick up our sleeve."

Seth's face became grave. These men with their rough frontier ways truly respected him, as he respected them, but through his mind there flashed a long-remembered warning of his father's.

"Seth, every man has his own game. Every man is apt to be just a bit better at some particular little stunt than any fellow he'll run up against. So, sonny, any time you think you're getting real good at one thing don't go fooling yourself that you're a world beater on everything else." So Seth's father's advice had been.

"I don't know, boys, I suppose you want me to clean up on him. I'd hate to see a city chap beat all the

shots in Chilcoot district, but I can only promise to do my best. He may be the best shot."

"Hey, boys, here he comes now," and one of the men gesticulated up the street.

A young man, scarcely older than Seth, was coming along the humpy boardwalk. The wind did not ruffle his tight-fitting, neat khaki uniform. Upon his arm was a brown leather rifle case. He had keen, blue eyes and a straight back. The two boys were introduced. Upon the young Mr. Shepley's breast was a gold medal inscribed, "Expert Marksman."

Seth felt the piercing eyes of Mr. Shepley gazing curiously at his old lever action under his arm.

"Is this the gun you use in match shooting?" he inquired with a stray smile.

"Never did any match shooting, Mr. Shepley," replied Seth proudly, displaying his prized gun, "but this is the only gun I ever handled and if the rifling lasts, the only one I most likely ever will."

The newcomer looked over the old, worn rifle.

"What elevation do you use for a thousand yards?" he inquired.

"Never shoot a thousand yards," replied Seth. "One hundred yards is my limit."

"Don't you use a gun sling for close shooting?"

"Nope—never used one in my life," answered Seth, and for some reason he checked the additional answer. "A seal might swim just about fifty yards farther or dive while one was tinkering with a sling."

Mr. Shepley smiled again, in fact his smile was becoming almost constant. From its leather case he pulled forth his gun. It was a magnificently finished

U. S. Army service rifle with a delicately adjusted peep sight upon its receiver and the regulation spade-shaped army sight at the muzzle.

"You have good sights upon your gun, Mr. Woodruff, but I think you'd better borrow my gun for our match. I have another one with me, the one I won my first championships with."

Seth took the newcomer's gun into his hands. It was a fine gun, he admitted breathlessly to himself—it made his gun—look—like—thirty cents. Undoubtedly its trajectory was much flatter. With such a gun he would never have to allow for range as he did with his old gun and its worn rifling—but a surge of loyalty for his own old weapon came over Seth. He handed back the fine weapon to its owner.

"Thank you for the offer, Mr. Shepley, but I've grown up with this old curiosity and though it doesn't do much, I know just what it will do."

The entire village turned out to the match. Word went up into the hills even—Old Man Woodruff's boy Seth was taking on this new young crack from the State University, and the woodsmen, loyal to the core to the boy of their own woods and shore, came by dory, skid road, and deer trail to see the affair, and, after the dubious fashion of their kind, lay bets upon their favorite.

The match was according to military rules or nearly so. Two hundred yards was picked as the distance. This was twice as far as Seth was accustomed to shoot and just about the shortest range the young expert ever shot over, though this Seth did not know. They fired five shots offhand, five sitting, five kneeling, and five

lying prone upon the ground. An eight-inch bull's eye at two hundred yards is quite a small thing, as narrow to the eye as a fine lead pencil a full yard from the eye.

The match went off rapidly. The woodsmen were hilariously confident before the shooting began but they quickly became grave.

At the offhand shooting Seth, with his old rifle, shooting twice as far as he ever found it practical to do but with an uncanny gift in holding steady, almost tied the precise young man from the city. At sitting position he lost a little more decisively and about the same at kneeling. But it was at the prone shooting that he was routed. The military expert after carefully adjusting his sling sent shot after shot, square into the eight-inch bull's eye. Seth, at times, could hit it also. The idea had not been to pick impossibly small targets, but to pick ones small enough to require great skill to hit them consistently.

At the end of the defeat the newcomer took from his pocket a small square of milk-white glass two and a half inches square. This, too, he placed at two hundred yards' distance. On his second try he shattered it. A sigh of mingled dismay and admiration went up from the assembled crowd.

Seth turned from the field with something like a tear in his eye. It was not that he, Seth Woodruff, had been humbled, but it was the fact that he had not been able to vindicate the magnificent trust his own people had in his ability. Their hearts were heavier than his. Good shooting was a tradition with them—but Seth could clearly see that it was not this type of shooting that counted with them.

The crowd dispersed. Old Michael put his arm around the boy. "Don't you worry, Seth," he was saying; "that young bird would die of starvation hunting seals."

"I don't know—I don't know," murmured Seth, looking down at the old rifle that had served him so well for so long. Seth did not hear the young expert say to one of his summer-boarder friends—"That young hick doesn't know how well he can shoot. His offhand shooting, with that gun, was simply marvelous. He may not know it but I do."

The holiday spirit had left the town. Down in the secluded glade where the wind could not strike, the match had gone on without much interruption, but once back in the streets of the little exposed village, the wind was a fury of great, rough hands. A nasty night was coming on, clear but wild. A dejected little group ate a late supper in the little hotel dining room. Seth had a depressing feeling that something was lost, something in the opinion these men had of him and themselves.

The night grew black outside and the clatter of dishes could scarce be heard above the storm. Seth walked down toward the harbor to store his canoe away. As he gazed out over the harbor entrance an invisible cold hand of dismay clutched at his heart. What had happened to the Minos Point light? Pitch blackness showed where its white, rocking gleam should be.

Down to the point Seth hurried. A coast steamer, a halibut boat, might be making for the harbor at any

moment. Suddenly the light burst into view. Yet something was still grievously the matter.

Then Seth saw. The great steel buoy, anchor and all, had shifted in the storm. It was no longer lying just off the point of Minos rocks, but had dragged itself square into the middle, or nearly so, of the harbor channel. The peril was plain. Steamers coming in knew that if they held just to the north of the rocking light they would invariably strike the harbor mouth and deep water. If they did so with the light in this new position they would pile up on the rocks to the north.

Anxiously Seth scanned the horizon of darkness. Not a light could be seen, but from far out at sea came the heavy, wind-borne tremor of a deep-sea steamer's whistle, bellowing once, twice, many times.

"Somebody in trouble," thought Seth, and the thought rapidly followed that the only port within miles for a crippled ship to make for was Chilcoot harbor. He turned back toward town. He met a small group of people hurrying toward the cliff.

"What's the matter?" Seth breathlessly asked, sensing something odd in the situation.

"Why, Herb Jones just got a message on his receiving set, the one he gets the broadcast stuff from Gray's Harbor with, that a big Pacific Coast passenger steamer is headed in for Chilcoot harbor. They have one shaft broken and can't proceed. Operator said they could keep hove to but that they could save hundreds of dollars' worth of coal if they came in and laid over until the storm blows out."

Seth understood. Herb Jones had a receiving set only and no sender, so any warning to the oncoming vessel was impossible. In a quarter of an hour the whole town was on the cliff at the harbor mouth. Far out at sea the lights of the oncoming vessel with its hundreds of men, women, and children aboard, gleamed dimly, yet looming larger every moment. And in the center of the channel rocked the deceptive Minos Point light, leading the great ship straight to its doom.

"Shoot out the light, shoot it out if they can't get it out some other way," shouted a voice. Small boats had tried to get to the light but none could live in the wild tangle of cold water. It was as out of reach as though it were on the moon.

A great cry went up at the suggestion. "Where's that expert shot from the city?" asked another voice. Soon the fusilade of shots began. Everyone in the village who had a rifle was firing away. But like all owners of rifles of any power their supplies of shells were comparatively small. And the wildly rocking light was a seemingly unguessable range away in the storm. Men dropped out of the shooting with ammunition gone. From the beach hotel some miles away the expert Mr. Shepley was finally brought.

He adjusted his sling carefully and, lying prone, methodically fired away. But the rocking light rocked on—and the steamer's lights grew big. A litter of empty shells soon lay scattered in the darkness beside him.

"I can't hit that target while it's jumping around so crazily," he muttered beneath his breath, "and I

can only make a wild guess at the range." A few minutes later he spoke again. "I've but five shells left, and I want that young Woodruff fellow to try them," he said to the amazed crowd clustered close around in the darkness. "A man has to shoot by feel in the dark like this."

Seth was ushered reluctantly through the crowd. He fired the five shells—but with no avail. The great white target, target of ten thousand storms, now of an equal number of shots, rocked on. The steamer's lights seemed very close. Were that great white light extinguished, she would have to heave to, not daring to come in, and her precious cargo of lives would be safe.

Seth with the empty gun in his hands found himself weeping quietly upon the wiry grass in the darkness. From the gloom he hauled forth the worn, lever-action gun. It gleamed dully in the brief stab of light from a pocket flash.

"Can you handle a paddle?" he shouted to Shepley.

"Sure thing," replied the eager expert, anxious to do anything to help. Seth led the way to the beach and they boarded the canoe. Wielding two paddles they drove it toward the mouth of the harbor. They could not hope to sweep up the main channel to the light but hugging close to the rocks they gained, after a brief fight, the lee of a stone knob that brought them a full hundred yards nearer to the bobbing light. They could not land upon the rock so the full hundred yards was offset by the wild staggering of the frail canoe.

Seth began firing. He had one box left. Into the wild sea flew the ejected shells. The light rocked on. There

were three shells left. Not only the white mast headlight of the steamer was now visible but the red and green side lights also. She was coming head on for the rocks well to the north of the channel, trusting the false light. Seth sobbed aloud in the darkness. Two more shells. Something in his despair cleared away the despondency that had hung upon him since the shooting match. "Imagine it's a seal, Seth, imagine it's a seal," the suggestion came to him.

There was one shell left in the box when he took aim. There was a brief lull in the wind and waves.

"Paddle, paddle out toward the light now, while we can," shouted Seth to Shepley. The paddle dove deep. They gained perhaps fifty yards. Then a great, hissing wave came sweeping through the darkness, its crest smoking with cruel, phosphorescent light. But Seth did not care. Over the muzzle of his gun, the gun that was part of his life, loomed the eye of a great seal—a white, glowing eye, an eye trying to dodge between some unseen rocks. Forgetting the storm, the occasion, thinking only of one more seal to his old gun's credit, Seth squeezed off the trigger. Over him hung the wave, and over the low canoe it swept. Lost in the sea was the ancient rifle, and Seth and Shepley were battling toward the swamped canoe with water, stinging and salt, in their faces. Seth paddled to the top of a wave. The light was gone!

When the seas swept them into the quiet of the harbor and they were dragged from the water by willing hands, the storm was a-quiver with the hoarse calls of the heavy steamer's whistle, as though she were a monster crying in perplexity and pain. But the side

lights had disappeared and the people on the cliff knew that she was standing out to sea.

A month later, into the small cabin of Seth Woodruff strode a committee of townsmen headed by Mr. Shepley. To Seth he handed a rifle the like of which Seth had never seen.

"A present, Mr. Woodruff, from the town of Chilcoot and the Pacific Coast Steamship Company. It is Uncle Sam's special new model, sniper's rifle, the most accurate in the world. And here's an order for shells for it, all the shells you wish to purchase, for life."

Seth, sitting on the edge of his bunk, choked back a sob for in his pocket he was fumbling a tiny object, the last shell from the box used by his father's gun before it had plunged from his hand into the sea.

SQUID

BY ALBERT W. TOLMAN

CAPTAIN TOM CORCORAN was fuming up and down the deck of the *Sweet Sixteen,* having a heart-to-heart talk with himself. He had started with a thought and a scowl; but as dory after dory forged out of the fog with little or nothing, he passed from whispering, growling, and muttering to vigorous, untrammeled speech, waxing louder and hoarser and redder and more indignant.

"Well, Martin, an' how many hundredweight have you an' Ben got?" snarled he, as Weed and his dory-mate Easton rowed up.

He glowered over the rail at the scanty catch in the boat's bottom, then snorted sarcastically.

"Sure, an' it's wearin' dimunds an' ridin' in Pierce-Arrows we'll all be, aft'r this trip's over! Fishin' f'r cod? Nay, nay, nev'r a bit of it! We're out aft'r cuttle-fish t' save canary birds fr'm starvin' t' death. Pretty soon we'll up killick an' hike f'r Gloucester wit' a holdful of fine salt fog."

By the time Dave Darcy and Brant Nixon bumped the side with a bare hundred pounds, Captain Tom's temper was feather-white. He lifted his cap and salaamed with icy politeness.

"Welc'me back t' th' old home, b'ys! Who said any-

thin' about cod? Nev'r mind, nev'r mind! T'row 'em ov'r! They're not wort' mentionin'. Swing aboard, an' eat all th' nice hot dinner you can, an' then lie down f'r a nap. Aft'r you're good an' rested, an' 've eased y'r blist'rs wit' cold cream, dig out th' old mouth-organ, Dave, an' push some jazz off y'r chest, while Brant cuts loose a clog. Then we'll jolly out th' rest of th' day, yarnin' an' playin' checkers, while Nap fries doughnots f'r th' crowd. A life on th' ocean wave, what! So long as you fellers have a good time an' eat hearty, nothin' else matters."

Then he turned savage.

"An' you ginks call y'rselves fishermen, heh?" he sneered. "If I couldn't bring in bigger loads than you've brought to-day, I'd jump ov'r th' side an' drown myself!"

A Grand Banker may be the fastest, fanciest craft that ever slipped down Essex River; she may be rigged from truck to keelson with the best and latest gear; she may be manned by lineal descendants of Izaak Walton, and commanded by as canny a captain as was Sol Jacobs, king of mackerel-killers; she may be anchored in just the right spot at just the right season, with millions of fat cod feeding about her trawls; but, unless she is supplied with the proper kind of bait, nothing doing.

Now the cod is a gourmand, a very epicure. When the herring are running, he will not bite capelin; and when the capelin are running, he will not bite herring. One thing, however, he will bite, ravenously and eternally, and that is squid.

The squid is a mollusk, with a tapering, cylindrical

body, and eight arms, lined with suckers. His shell, which is on his inside, consists of a quill-shaped plate or backbone. He is an ink-manufacturer, who foils his enemies by throwing out a smoke-screen of jet-black. He propels himself forward by means of his terminal fins, and shoots himself backward by alternately dilating and contracting his sack-like frame. The small squid come over the Grand Bank in millions in the spring; the large ones, with bodies of tremendous size and far-reaching arms, dwell at unknown depths, but appear frequently enough to prove that their existence is no myth.

To the cod the squid is far more toothsome than a course dinner. Something about that leathery, gelatinous envelope touches his fishy heart; for, as in the case with some other people, a cod's heart is in his stomach. A cod dies happy, if he can die with his mouth full of squid.

That afternoon Dave and Brant were fishing again from their dory, more than a mile from the *Sweet Sixteen*. The fog was thick and salt and damp, but it was far more agreeable than Captain Tom's tongue and temper. Just within sight were two men in another dory, likewise evidently having a run of poor luck.

"Those fresh capelin aren't even nibbled!" exclaimed Brant in disgust, as he heaved in the trawl. "What few fish we've got are on hooks baited with the squid we gaffed yesterday. Those goggle-eyed slackers just smell the bait, and go by. When we get back to the schooner, won't the air be full of brimstone!"

"We're not to blame, if the fish won't bite."

"When Cap's mad is up, a little thing like our not being to blame doesn't trouble him any. He has to take it out on somebody. No wonder he feels sore! With good bait, every day'd be worth three hundred dollars."

"Guess we'll have to run in to Newfoundland for some squid."

"Looks like it!"

Brant glanced across the tossing gray swells.

"Who are those gazabos? Not Gloucester men?"

"Strangers of mine. Don't talk too loud. They're watching us like hawks."

"I don't like their sneaky way."

"Same here! They're altogether too nosey to suit me."

Brant slung aboard a good-sized cod.

"A ten-pounder! Put him with the other one, so he won't be lonesome."

The roller creaked; the line came in harder.

"What's this? A whale?"

Something below offered a stubborn resistance to his vigorous heaving.

"Those fellows have struck oil, too," observed Dave.

Drops of perspiration trickled down Brant's face. A tangled coil of line and hooks appeared. Disgustedly Brant stopped pulling.

"We've hooked their trawl! And it's an awful snarl!"

"What's it baited with?"

"Capelin—same as ours. And just about as many fish."

Violent language told that their neighbors had made a similar discovery. As all four worked at the Gordian knots, the dories drew together. At last one of the strangers impatiently drew his knife.

"Next time you fellows'll know better than to set over somebody else."

Dave reached for an oar.

"Hold on there!" he warned. "Don't you cut our trawl! Use your brains, if you've got any. We're no more to blame than you are. It was the current that made the trouble."

His stocky figure and determined air were too strong arguments to be disregarded. Sulkily the man laid down his knife. Ten minutes later the trawls were disentangled, and the dories drifted apart.

"I'll take my turn pulling now," offered Dave.

Brant made no reply. He was staring earnestly across the heaving graybacks.

"What are you mooning at?" demanded Dave, surprised at his mate's silence.

"I see something," returned Brant.

"So do I—fog and water."

"No; it looks like a spar or a dead shark."

Both gazed at the object, floating just on the edge of the surrounding mist.

"Let's go and see what it is," proposed Dave.

"Don't speak so loud! They'll hear you."

The boys shipped their oars, and began pulling. The other boat started, too.

"Here they come! Row hard!"

It was neck and neck. Neither pair were greenhorns at an ash breeze. Back and forth swayed the contest.

ants, the oars grinding between the thole-pins. Spray flew, and foam streamed away from the dashing prows.

No Harvard-Yale race was ever rowed more desperately than this impromptu regatta for unknown stakes. Whatever the prize might be, both crews wanted it; besides, it was a point of honor not to be beaten.

Less than ten yards more!

"Now dig up all you've got!" shouted Dave.

They dug deep. So did the others. The boys won.

"We've got 'em!" yelled Dave. "Snap in your oars, Brant, and stand ready with the gaff!"

By Bank law the find belonged to whoever made fast to it first. Brant leaped forward, caught up the short wooden pole, and struck its iron hook into the floating object.

"What is it?" asked Dave.

"Search me! But, whatever it is, it's ours!"

The other dory drew up alongside, its crew disappointed but curious.

The prize looked like a log, about twenty feet long and two in diameter. It was grayish yellow in color, and floated five or six inches above water. Dave's eyes suddenly lighted.

"I know! It's part of the body of a squid."

"Can't be!" objected Brant. "Whoever saw one so large?"

Dave stuck to his theory.

"I've heard of squid as big as that coming ashore on Newfoundland. Say! This may be just what we need for bait."

The defeated dorymen roared; but there was something hollow about their laughter.

"Ho! Ho! What fools you fellows are! No squid in the ocean ever grew to that size. Better get back to your trawl, boys!"

"Anyway," retorted Dave, "we're going to hang on to it, until we find out for sure. We saw it first, and we fastened to it first; and if that doesn't make it ours, I don't know anything about Grand Bank law."

"That piece may be worth hundreds of dollars to the *Sweet Sixteen,*" said Brant.

The other two roared again, almost too loudly.

"Bosh!" sneered the spokesman.

" 'Tisn't worth the liver of a two-pound cod. Come on, Bill! Let's not waste any more time here!"

Their oars dipped, but somehow the dory did not seem to gain much headway.

"Let's run a line to it, Dave," proposed Brant.

Pulling out his gaff, he reached for a coil of small rope.

"Look out!" shouted Dave.

The strangers had backed water suddenly, and one had sprung into the stern with a gaff. He made an ineffectual swipe at the derelict; but he was a moment too late. Brant's hook struck once more into the tough skin, a foot ahead of his rival's.

"Oh, ho!" jeered Dave. "So it *is* worth something, after all!"

Sullenly the other boat withdrew. A few rods away its occupants held a low-voiced conference. Then they bent to their oars, and disappeared.

"Brant," said Dave, "I don't like their actions.

They're probably as hard up for bait as we are. They know what this squid is worth, and they intend to have it, if it's a possible thing. I'll bet my old boots they've gone to their vessel, and that they'll come back with two or three other dories, and take this fish away from us. How could we stop 'em?"

"Well, what are we going to do?" asked Brant. "It'd take hours for us to tow it to the schooner. If we leave it here, and go for help, we'd never find it again in this fog."

"Brant!"

"Say it!"

"I'll take the horn, and get on top this squid, and stay here, until you can bring back another dory from the *Sixteen.*"

"You're crazy, Dave! You'd slip off, and drown. Besides, 'twouldn't hold you."

"That's easy to find out. Swing the dory alongside."

Brant obeyed. Striking his gaff into the grayish body, Dave stepped gingerly over the gunwale. His weight settled the squid a few inches, but its top still floated above the surface.

"There! What did I tell you? Now give me that horn and lance."

Brant hesitated.

"But suppose we couldn't find you again! You know there's a strong current running."

"I'll risk that!" exclaimed Dave impatiently. "Don't waste any more time. Go ahead, and get back as soon as you can."

Thus exhorted, Brant delayed no longer. He passed over the signalling horn, and the lance, a swordfisher-

man's harpoon on a stout six-foot staff. Pulling his long, red-rubber boots up to his hips, and jabbing the gaff deeper into the tough skin, Dave slipped down astride the squid, so that his legs hung in the water.

"I'll hold the fort till you come back. Get a wiggle on! Better tell Cap'n Tom to bring his gun."

"What if a shark comes!"

"We haven't seen one for a week. If one shows up, I'll prick him off with the lance. On your way!"

Brant looked serious, as he passed out of sight into the fog. It was not a pleasant thing for him to leave his dorymate floating there alone. Dave settled down for a long wait. The rapid dip of the oars, growing fainter, told that Brant was rowing as fast as he could. Soon the sound died away entirely. Only the murmur of the wind and the ripple of the waves broke the silence.

Time dragged. Dave looked his prize carefully over. When alive and unmutilated, the squid must have been a tremendous fellow. His arms would have measured thirty or forty feet, amply long and powerful enough to pull down a good-sized boat. An ugly customer to tackle! But Captain Tom would be glad enough to get his body for bait. Dave felt no doubt about that. He had heard of other schooners finding pieces, and securing big catches of cod. Why not the *Sweet Sixteen!*

The body rolled slightly in the rising swells. Dave balanced himself like a circus rider. He did not care to be unseated. It would be hard to regain his slippery saddle.

By this time Brant must have reached the vessel. She wasn't much more than a mile away. The fog was thickening. Dave felt lonesome. He almost began to feel sorry that he had let Brant go off and leave him there. It *was* foolhardy.

The sea chill struck through his rubber boots. He thought of sharks. If one came, he would be in a bad fix. Involuntarily he drew up his legs.

Alone in that misty narrowing circle of heaving gray water, he listened longingly for the dip of oars. What if Brant couldn't find him!

Nonsense! The horn could be heard almost a mile away. By this time Brant and Captain Tom must have left the schooner. He blew a long blast.

Hoo—oo—oo——

What was that on the very edge of the fog? It looked like a black fin, sailing slowly and smoothly through the water.

Dave's pulse jumped. A queer thrill ran through him. Pooh! He must have been mistaken. He looked again. No; his eyes hadn't cheated him. A triangle of membrane was sliding easily along, leaving a tiny ripple.

Only one fish had a fin like that—a shark!

Strange little shivers ran up and down Dave's spine. His blood chilled. That black notch must belong to a big fellow, who could make mincemeat of a man in short order. Dave wished that his legs were at least a foot shorter. They would be that and more, once the shark closed his jaws on them.

Perhaps the sea-tiger hadn't noticed him. Perhaps

he was going by. But no! He was describing a large, deliberate circle round the squid, and gradually drawing nearer. Dave followed him with all his eyes.

Through the side of a swell he got a good view of the huge fish. He was a monster, more than twenty feet long, a "man-eater." Dave knew the type. He had seen the head of one in a museum, its yawning mouth set with seven or eight rows of saw-like teeth.

Why didn't somebody come from the schooner? He blew the horn long and frantically. But he took good care not to lose his balance.

Hark! Wasn't that the dip of oars out there in the fog? Dave listened painfully. Yes, he could distinguish the grinding of ash against oak. He raised a shout.

"Come quick! A shark! A shark!"

No reply. Strange! They must have heard him. The oars sounded more distinctly every minute. Again he blew the horn. Again he yelled.

"Brant! Cap'n Tom! This way! A shark!"

Still no answer, but the oars splashed quicker. His rescuers were coming as fast as they could.

The fin was only a few yards off. It moved faster, as if the shark knew intuitively that succor was approaching. He was preparing to make a dash. Dave kept his eyes gummed to that black notch.

Suddenly it shot straight toward the squid!

Dave yelled in terror. He saw the savage, lunging nose, the brown back, the grayish belly, as the monster rolled up on its side to bite. Clinging desperately to the gaff with his left hand, and flinging his legs as

far forward and as high as he could, he thrust with his harpoon at the neck of the forayer.

A violent shock. A wrench. A splashing flurry.

Dave was almost unseated. But he managed to gash the shark's neck with his sharp lance. Off darted the pirate, leaving a trail of blood. He had struck the squid a little back of where the boy sat. Dave could see that a piece as big as a water-bucket had been gouged out.

The foggy surface was unbroken. Perhaps the shark had gotten enough, and gone off. No! Dave knew better than that. That taste had merely whetted the monster's appetite. Squid tasted as good to him as it did to the cod. Soon he would be back for more.

Louder and louder splashed the oars. Dave blew his horn. He shouted.

"Quick! Quick! The shark'll get me!"

Why didn't somebody answer?

There was the fin! Again the fish rushed. This time he struck the body just in front of Dave, who got a fair thrust at him. Away he rushed, staining the water crimson. A flip of his tail almost upset the fisherman.

It was becoming an old story. The very next rush those sharp teeth might come together on Dave's leg; then the leg would be off, and so would everything else.

Splash! Splash! Splash!

Indignation at the silence of his friends overcame Dave's fear.

"Are you dumb out there?" he shouted.

Two dories, side by side, burst through the fog. Dave's wrath evaporated. The rowers did not belong to the *Sweet Sixteen!*

Once more the shark shot in, close to the boy's foot. A trifle closer, and he would have taken it off. Dave yelled and stabbed; this time his blow went wild.

The dories slowed down, their occupants interested and grinning spectators of the conflict.

"Hulloo, Robinson Crusoe!" hailed one jokingly. "How are you enjoyin' life on your floatin' island?"

Dave didn't answer. The humor of the situation did not appeal to him; furthermore, he was bitterly disappointed. His blasts on the horn had led those men straight to what they wanted. They were after that squid. It looked as if they would get it, too, unless the *Sweet Sixteen* dories hurried.

"Say, fellow," continued the spokesman, "better give it up, and let us take you in. If we don't, he will."

He swung his hand toward the sailing fin, even now drawing nearer. Dave, listening hopefully, shook his head in refusal.

"You're a blamed fool to risk your life for a rotten slab of fish! Pretty soon that shark'll bite your leg off; and then we'll get the squid anyway."

Off in the fog rose the unmistakable beat of oars. The *Sweet Sixteens* were coming.

"Dave! Dave!"

It was Brant's voice.

"This way!" yelled Dave back.

Disgust was written on the strangers' faces.

"We'd better make fast to it," said the leader. "We'll have a claim to it then."

They rowed toward the squid. Again the shark charged. Dave lunged at him, lost his balance, and went overboard, dropping the lance. He yelled in

horror. He was at the monster's mercy. Just as soon as the great fish should turn and see him, his doom would be sealed.

He shouted and splashed, watching the ominous fin. At any second it might be shooting toward him.

"Hold up, Dave! We're coming!"

A dory broke through the fog as fast as two pairs of oars could drive it. In the bow stood Captain Tom with his shotgun.

The shark darted in toward the kicking, yelling fisherman, and whirled up on his side. Dave shut his eyes. There was a chorus of shouts, then—*bang!*

Captain Tom had fired pointblank from a few feet.

The buckshot churned the water. Two or three stung Dave; but at so short a distance they had no time to scatter, hence the shark received practically the whole charge. He flung up his tail, and vanished in a bloody flurry.

Dave had regained his hold of the gaff, and was clinging to it with one hand. Brant caught him round the body, and lifted him into the dory. Dave could hardly believe his senses, when he found himself safely aboard, and his legs whole.

One of the strangers also struck his gaff into the squid.

"Guess this belongs to us!"

Captain Tom's face reddened.

"Guess again! My man hasn't let go that stick, an' he hasn't asked any help from you. He found it first, an' risked his life to keep it f'r us. It was his horn, signallin' us, that led you to it. Pull out that gaff, an' vamoose!"

"Let's split it!"

"Split nothin'!" roared the captain.

"'Tain't worth anything anyway."

"Maybe so; but, whether it is or not, it belongs to us."

Reluctantly the man pulled out his gaff.

"You're a mean bunch! We'd lick you for a cent."

"Better go while th' rowin's good," warned Captain Tom. "I've another barrel left, an' she's pretty tender on th' trigger."

The strangers vanished, talking.

"You two fellers are always gettin' into some kind of a scrape," growled Corcoran. "This may be another gold brick. But I guess we'd better muckle onto it, and drag it in."

Weed and Eaton came along; and the two dories began to tow the squid to the *Sweet Sixteen*. The rough sea made their progress slow and hard. More than an hour elapsed before they hoisted it aboard the schooner with the throat halyards.

The next morning they baited four tubs of trawl from it for each of the eight dories. The first set yielded several hundred dollars' worth of big cod. Their prize furnished them with bait for a set a day for two weeks.

"That squid's been wort' ov'r three thousand dollars to us," acknowledged Captain Tom. "You b'ys did well to get it."

Dave rubbed his leg reflectively.

"I wonder how the shark's feeling," he said.

THE CASE OF THE "SHEARWATER"

BY JOHN FLEMING WILSON

FROM the California line north the Pacific Ocean belies its name woefully. No port worthy the name gives refuge to the hard-pressed seaman till he arrives at the Columbia River; and from Coos Bay to that stormy entrance the rugged shore is strewn with wreckage. The Government has done its best with lights and coast-guard stations to mitigate the seafarer's lot. Yet even with all this, there are times when human skill is useless, human preparedness futile, and men can only deliberate on mysteries which none can foresee or explain.

In the year 1915 the steamship *Shearwater,* bound north for Puget Sound with thirty-six in her crew and eight passengers, came abreast of Yaquina Bay one blowy November day about noon. On shore Captain Gridley, spyglass in hand, was talking to Tad Sheldon, the son of one of the coast guardsmen.

"Looks like a well-found vessel, that," he said gruffly. "I've been master of many in my time, Tad, and I like that packet's looks. She ought to make the Columbia to-morrow this time, taking it easy as she is. I wonder what her name is?"

Tad listened respectfully. Captain Gridley had retired from active work a couple of years before after

an honorable lifetime of toil and anxiety. He had never lost a ship, was his boast. Yet, as everybody on Yaquina Bay knew, he was the first to fly into a passion if anyone berated a skipper who had met with misfortune.

"You never can tell!" he would roar, banging his fist on the table. "Take the best ship and the best master and the best crew that ever set sail from port and they are in God's hands. I've known better men than myself lose a vessel, spite of good seamanship and a good lookout."

A bit of a crank, people called Gridley—a man you didn't know much about except that he was highly respected Outside, in that world of which Yaquina Bay knew little. But Tad liked him, was flattered to be seen with him, and never missed a chance of picking up valuable information from the old man so wise in matters of the sea. Now the boy, eyes fixed on the steamship a few scant miles out, shifted from one foot to the other, ruffling his blond hair with one brown hand. Tad was eighteen and eagerly preparing for his initiation into the coast guard. Already he was an expert on matters pertaining to his future profession. Among these was the keeping track of the departure and arrival of all the various craft which used the Pacific. So now he said confidently, "That is the *Shearwater,* sir. She left San Francisco three days ago with machinery and castings for the Sound. You can see how deep in the water she is."

Captain Gridley pulled at his mustachios, which looked like twin flames he had breathed from his nostrils. He used his spyglass again. To Tad's amazement

the old man's hands were trembling a little. And there was a faint quiver in the old man's voice as he muttered: *"Shearwater?* And she's a wee mite by the head, too. Must steer like a tub."

Sheldon nodded wisely. "She is by the head, sir," he agreed.

Gridley flicked a glance at his companion. "She is." He suddenly lifted one clenched fist and shook it at the vessel. "That's the fault of some imbecile mate! They take a chance with so good a vessel as that! Fools! Idiots!"

It was like Gridley to become vehement over what he might call mishandling a ship, yet Tad felt that the old mariner's interest in the *Shearwater* was peculiar. However, his own curiosity was pricked when Captain Gridley's bronzed face flushed and he raised his voice two tones:

"There's an enormous wave coming in from sea, Tad. Can you see it?" Without waiting for an answer he scanned the ripply, clouded sky and snorted, "I don't know what the scientific explanation is, but I myself have met just such waves several times." He peered through the glass again, steadying his hands with an effort. Then he said abruptly, "Tad, that steamer is carrying a whole point of port helm to hold her up into the nor'wester. Heaven knows whether they can bring her up to meet that tremendous swell."

Tad's sharp eyes had already discerned the dark line on the horizon beyond the steamer. He realized with a gasp that the lifting hill of water was a tidal wave. He saw it advancing swiftly, rising higher out of the deep, sweeping down on the *Shearwater.*

"Captain Soules doesn't seem to be making any preparation to meet it," the boy cried excitedly.

"Soules!" repeated Gridley in a suddenly harsh voice. "Is that the skipper's name?"

"Thomas Soules, sir," Tad replied quickly. "You see, it's part of our business to know such things."

"I see," was the grim response. The old man's face grew strangely pallid. But his firmly set lips did not open again except to murmur presently, "Just as I thought! She's hard over and she won't come up to meet it! Now we'll see what will happen!"

Man and boy did not take their straining eyes off the steamship, cramped tight by rudder and wind, broadside on to the rushing mountain of water.

"There's only a hundred and twenty-five feet on that bank, and a northerly set to the current," Tad muttered. "That sea will *break,* sir."

Gridley croaked inarticulately in his throat, not moving his lips.

Now they could plainly see the foaming crest. Still the *Shearwater* steamed on in the trough of the sea, helpless. Then, as if pulled over by an invisible but omnipotent hand, she began to lean over, to careen toward the great surge whose inshore slope now curved dark and forbidding above her. Then she sank swiftly, almost out of sight, into the tremendous valley in front of the onrushing sea.

Tad felt Gridley's iron hand on his shoulder, realized that the old man had dropped his spyglass. But he could not take his own eyes from the scene.

"It'll break!" he whispered.

The words were hardly out of his mouth when the

lad saw the *Shearwater* suddenly heave itself out of the trough and begin to rise on the enormous shoulder of the wave till it swung dizzily against the sky, as if caught there for an instant and held.

Then the great sea broke suddenly in a cloud of spume and spray. In that instant the steamer vanished.

Captain Gridley's fingers relaxed their cruel grasp on Tad's shoulder. The boy barely caught his whisper. "Cap'n Soules, did you say?"

But Sheldon did not answer. The *Shearwater* had reappeared.

This time she was much closer, having been swept a fair half mile inshore. But now they were staring at a wreck. The steamer's upper works were gone, masts broken off, funnel vanished, all that had made her a thing of power and beauty. Tad swept the spyglass up and focussed it on the scene.

Two men were on the fo'c'sle head apparently struggling to get an anchor overside. As he gazed a crested sea swept them both away.

"That did for her!" Tad heard his companion croak. "I reckon she must ha' lost most of her deck crew. She's a wreck, my lad."

Sheldon threw a quick glance downward at the old captain kneeling in the sand and peering out of bulging eyes. Then discipline asserted itself and he raced for the coast-guard station, reported what he had seen, and sped back to the spot where he had left Gridley. As he reached him the tidal wave was spending its last force on the beach. Its expiring effort had, he saw, thrown a weed-laden surge up and about the captain who still knelt amid the blowing spume and spindrift

with his eyes fixed on the wreck, his lips moving silently.

Something in the old man's expression wiped the words off Tad's lips and he stood a moment in a kind of awe. Then (they were standing on the northerly shore of the entrance to the bay) his eyes caught sight of the lifeboat making its way through the now thoroughly churned waters of the lower reach toward the bar, a wild turmoil of breaking seas and tumbling crests. He saw that the coast-guard crew would have their hands full to make headway in such currents and cross tides. He had no time to lose if he was to help. He went to Gridley and touched him on the shoulder.

"Look!" he cried. "The crew is trying to get out and that wave has kicked up a mess on the bar that they can't breast!"

The captain turned his frozen eyes to the bay below them and sprang to his feet.

"We'll just take my forty-footer, Tad. You run the engine for me."

With unexpected spryness the old seaman plunged off through the sand with Sheldon at his heels. Five minutes later they were at Gridley's launch, tossing at its moorings in the tides. Without waiting for a word from Gridley the lad waded out and then swam swiftly to its side and climbed aboard. A moment's work and he had the engine running. By its help he maneuvered the dripping craft farther in and the captain, too, swung himself aboard.

"Let that anchor line go!" Gridley ordered. "No time to waste on heaving it in!"

And so they started off down the bay at full speed.

It took the launch ten minutes to reach the surfboat, struggling valiantly just within the bar. Five minutes more sufficed to take it in tow and make passage through the wild breakers threatening them on every hand. Once outside, Gridley set his course for the wreck.

On arrival there they found what they had feared: that the captain, engineer, chief mate, and several passengers and seamen had been washed overside and lost. The *Shearwater's* engine room was flooded and she rolled dangerously as they approached. But Gridley drove right on up and the surfboat swung off to ride easily while the state of affairs was examined into. It was to Gridley that the second mate told his brief and tragic story.

"She wouldn't come around," he said. "That wave was traveling a mile a minute and it caught most of 'em at mess. There's six feet of water in her hold now and my notion is to abandon her."

Captain Gridley cast an experienced eye over the wreck. It was already deep by the head and choppy seas were lapping at the weather rail. He nodded and hailed the life-saving crew. Its keeper agreed in the decision that the steamer would not outlive the day.

"The only thing to do is to leave her," Gridley told the second mate. "I haven't got power enough to tow you in. Anyway, your old packet won't last an hour. Why the dickens did you load your heavy weights amidships and none in the wings? And she was by the head, too!"

The mate tugged at his sea boots and shook his

head. "I didn't load her," he grumbled. "Captain Soules himself attended to that, sir—and he's gone." The man clutched at a sailor who was for swinging down into the surfboat. "No, you don't, my lad," he said sternly. "We get an anchor over first *and* foremost. That's rules and regulations."

"Right you are, Mister!" said Gridley. "Though I doubt whether your mudhooks hold in this current. But get your crew off. We'll see to getting the anchors over."

"Now I'm off for home," the keeper of the station said to the old man when all was seen to. "With this wind we can sail in finely. Leave you to yourself, Captain. *But* I wouldn't give ten cents for the wreck, sir. This weather will turn southerly before night. That means she'll be thrown up on the beach—if she lasts that long."

But the weather did not wait for the deeply laden *Shearwater* to make any port at all. By night, though she still floated, it had started to blow a heavy gale from the southeast and the doomed wreck, as could be seen from shore, still swam. But at midnight the anchor lights which Tad himself had set vanished amid spume and spindrift.

So the tragedy was noted in formal logbooks and reported to headquarters with the significant statement: "of the crew and passengers on board twelve are missing; twenty-three were taken off by the coast-guard crew. Wreck sank in eighty feet of water two miles off shore and south of the entrance of Yaquina Bay."

Later they buried the twelve as they washed ashore,

unidentifiable, but with due honors. When the last was under ground Captain Gridley, prayer book in hand and mustachios bristling, walked with Tad Sheldon, now a grown youth but with the inescapable boyishness which was always to be his heritage.

"Let it be a lesson to you," rasped the captain, clearing his throat. "Never put to sea in a ship that's not properly laden, well manned, and able in every way. Nine tenths of the accidents at sea are due to carelessness in some little particular. The *Shearwater* was built for the Great Lakes. Consequently when they loaded her in San Francisco she wouldn't mind her helm aright. Of course, you can attribute the whole affair to that wave—extraordinary in my experience and I've traveled the seas forty years, man and boy. But they do happen, and every right-minded skipper takes notice of the fact. Captain Soules," Gridley choked, "rest his spirit in peace! took a chance. The result was that his ship would not rise to that huge crest, was completely swept of all her upper works, and lies in eighty feet of water, where she will rot amid the ooze till doomsday."

"She wasn't really hurt," Tad returned. "Hull and engines and cargo are intact."

"But what silly good will they ever do any living man?" Gridley demanded.

"I know those banks pretty well," Sheldon replied. "Kit Carson and I have often fished for plaice off them. If I had the money——"

Gridley stopped in his tracks. "What would you do?" he demanded in a curiously gentle tone.

"Raise her," Tad answered briefly.

Gridley thrust the prayer book into his pocket and coughed harshly. "Eighty feet is pretty deep," he said curtly.

"Men have gone down twice that depth."

"So they have, so they have," Gridley returned unamiably. "And some came up alive and others were dragged up crushed in their suits. Eighty feet is more than you will get most men to go down, I can tell you. And to get men who will go down and work at that depth is an expensive business."

"I have a hundred and forty dollars saved up," Tad said bashfully.

Gridley snorted contemptuously, then laid a gnarled hand on the lad's shoulder. It must be remarked that Gridley was a very tall, angular, aquiline-faced man with a reputation for a furious temper. Now his hand gripped the boy's flesh savagely. "Are you game?" he asked.

"For what?" demanded Tad.

Gridley dropped his hand and walked a few paces thoughtfully. "Among a few poor investments that I have made in my life," went on the skipper, "was a Japanese abalone fishing outfit. I loaned them money and they went broke trying to make a fortune off Monterey Bay. The new law limiting the size and species of abalones that might be fished, put them on the beach financially. So I took over their outfit for my loan. The suits which are perishable I sold but I know a place where I can get two good diving dresses cheap." He glanced at his companion. "They are cheap because they are small, but they are of the latest pattern and new. Personally, I can't dive. It would cost

me a thousand dollars to have a dress made but I can get these new suits at a bargain and they will about fit you and Kit Carson. Have you ever done any diving?"

Tad admitted that he and his chum had never but once tried diving.

"It was in thirty feet of water, almost dark, and neither Kit nor I enjoyed it."

"It will be pitch dark at eighty feet," Gridley said dryly. "Do you know what the *Shearwater* was laden with?"

"Bronze and copper castings," was the prompt reply.

"I had a look at her manifest myself," the elder remarked. "If one could land half that stuff in the bay, it would mean a hundred thousand dollars in our pockets."

"And if we could land the vessel in the bay," Tad said excitedly.

"Another two hundred thousand for us," Gridley responded. "But we have neither apparatus nor the men."

He looked at Tad fiercely. " I can assure you that all I am going to invest is enough to get that diving launch and the suits here. I may lose my money on that. Either you or Kit or both of you may funk the affair when it cames to actual work."

The slow flush mounted the boy's cheek.

"As I say, I've only been down thirty feet," he said quietly. "It will take some time to find the *Shearwater,* anyway, for I know she dragged her anchor inshore. But I am ready to have a try at it and I know Kit never balks at anything."

The color in Tad's face grew deeper. "I'll put my hundred and forty dollars with yours."

Captain Gridley walked thoughtfully along for some time. When he spoke it was in an unusually hard voice. "I'll take your hundred and forty dollars and if anything happens to you it's your lookout."

Tad cast a half-admiring, half-suspicious look at the old seaman. Then he said curtly, "When will you have the launch and the suits here?"

"Inside of eight days," Gridley returned. "But you understand it's costing me fifteen hundred dollars, right out of my pocket."

That night at the Abbey House, Inspector Wellander of the coast guard shook hands briefly with Captain Gridley and they retired to a corner of the big sitting room.

"Look here, Wellander," said Gridley after a few cursory remarks, "you know those boys, Sheldon and Carson?"

"I hope to have them in the service in another eighteen months," said the inspector. "They come of good family and both of them have already distinguished themselves. Something in their blood, I reckon, that makes them born seamen."

"Maybe you'll have them and maybe you won't," Gridley growled. "You know me."

Wellander brushed his blond beard thoughtfully. "You are a hard man, Captain."

"What made me hard?" the other demanded; then without waiting for a reply, he went on to answer his own question. "Running ships for twenty-five years—manhandling crews—bringing old hookers into port

with cargoes safe and nobody missing—riding out typhoons in the China Sea when my men refused duty —comin' home after hard voyages to fight with owners over paints and stores—living in a dashed hotel while in port without a friend to chin-chin with. But I made money, Wellander. And God knows, it's done me little good. I want the old life, hard as it is." He stretched his strong arms upward. "To tell the truth, I'm sick for the old life. I'm going to try something new. And I'm going to take your young friends, Tad Sheldon and Kit Carson, with me."

The inspector fixed his blue eyes on his companion. "I'll tell you this much, Captain Gridley," he said. "Those boys are reserved for the coast guard. They are clean and loyal and true. If you try any tricks——"

"I've got a diving outfit and I'm going after the *Shearwater,*" Gridley remarked quietly.

Wellander digested this. "You're going to send the lads down as divers?"

"That's the idea."

"Eighty is pretty deep—even if you find the wreck in that depth."

"Two hundred thousand clear in it for all hands," Gridley interposed.

"The boys have agreed?" the inspector demanded.

"This afternoon."

"And they understand exactly the risks they run?" Wellander persisted.

Gridley smiled faintly. "I reckon they do. But, of course, there are always other risks than one counts on."

The inspector laid a sinewy hand on the other's

knee. "I understand perfectly that the money isn't your object," he said earnestly. "All the years I've heard of you, you never wanted money for its own sake. But somewhere hidden in you is a devil. And it's that carefully concealed devil which is influencing you now."

Gridley smiled austerely. "I've had a hard life," he answered in a harsh voice. "I like those kids. But are they up to what lies ahead of 'em? Can they stick it? Are they men?"

Wellander leaned forward and closed his knees on his clenched hands. "It's a hard school," he said gently. "And what you're going to do is to make or break those kids. I've dived myself." He glanced at Gridley with obscure and pleading glance. "A diver is on his own. He's alone 'way down there in the dark. The sand shifts under his feet. The currents wash him to and fro. And he must have faith."

"I'll be on the tender myself," was the response. "I tell you, I'll not let 'em go under, as many men you and I have known. They will find the *Shearwater* and when they've retrieved the stuff on her, they'll be men." Captain Gridley turned his tanned, stern face to his companion. "Aren't we all in the same boat, you and I? Groping in the dark for some hidden treasure and depending on someone we don't know to see that we have air and our signals are answered? That's life, Captain Wellander. You and I know it. We had to find it out ourselves. Now I'm going to give these boys a chance."

The inspector bowed his head. "If you lose one of them, I'll never forgive you," he murmured.

Gridley smiled. "I'll not come back if I lose one of 'em," he said. "I dived for pearls in the South Seas years ago."

A week later a big, roomy launch, fully equipped for diving, rode in over Yaquina Bay bar and moored at the old Government wharf. Gridley was the first down to meet her and her crew. That afternoon he sent for Tad Sheldon and Kit Carson. They came and inspected the launch curiously. An old seaman in charge explained to them the various details and intricacies of the machinery. When he was done, Gridley took Sheldon aside.

"Just where does the *Shearwater* lie?" he demanded.

Tad hesitated. "The last time I saw her riding lights she was just about over the fifteen-fathom bank and three miles south of the bar," he replied.

"How much scope did her cable have?" the captain pursued.

"Three hundred feet," Tad answered promptly.

"Then the first thing to do is to go out and find that cable," Gridley said grimly. "The ship is sure to be at the end of it."

Tad nodded. "When do we start?" he asked.

Gridley scanned the November sky. It was flecked with clouds. Then he lowered his gaze to the bar thundering between the breakwaters.

"It won't blow for a couple of days yet," he said softly. "And rough water doesn't matter in fifteen fathoms." He stared at Sheldon coldly. "To-morrow at dawn."

Tad went and saw Kit and discussed the matter with

him. Carson was dubious. "We neither of us ever did diving," he remarked. "And you and I know how the tides twist and turn over those grounds out there."

Tad laughed. "So we do. But"—he grew serious—"there's a chance for big money in it, and, more than that, for showing Gridley we chaps are up to his kind of work. Hard man, Gridley. The inspector was mentioning him to me. He seemed to think the old man was a pretty good sort—but hard. And we've got to get used to the hard things of life, Kit."

Kit, whose father had lost his life on duty, glanced at his chum gloomily. "I guess I know how hard life is," he replied.

No more was said, except an appointment to meet at the diving launch the next morning at dawn.

At that time they found Captain Gridley sourly inspecting the apparatus. As soon as the lads arrived, he gave the word and they cast off moorings and let the launch drift down with the tide till the first rollers from the bar began to lift them. Then the engines were set going and Gridley conned them out and to the bell buoy. Rounding this, he set a course over a sullenly moving sea to the south'ard for a couple of miles, then inshore for a mile.

"This is about the place," he told the boys.

Tad smiled. "I see a two-inch line forward and a grapnel," he replied. "Why not put it overside and let the launch drift till it takes hold. Then we'll be sure. You have to anchor the launch, anyway. Better to anchor it somewhere near the wreck."

Gridley nodded surlily and the grapnel was soon over and dragging on the sea bottom. Meanwhile Kit

Carson took soundings with the hand lead and found ninety-five feet of water here and a little more in other places. But suddenly the grapnel line came taut and a few careful tugs on it convinced them that they had the ill-fated ship's cable.

"Now," Gridley said quietly, "it's up to Tad to get into a suit and go down."

The process of getting into the canvas dress, having breast plate screwed on and helmet over that, consumed ten minutes. When he was all ready except the face plate, Tad found himself unable to walk with the twenty-eight-pound lead boots into which his feet were cramped, and the upper part of his body seemed oddly heavy.

The launch master then instructed him in the signals—one pull on the heavy new life line when he was on the bottom meant all right, four tugs on the same line meant he wanted to be hauled to the surface.

"We'll just fasten the life line about you now," said the man. "The launch is rolling and accidents will happen. When the face plate is screwed on, get on that short ladder and when all is clear I'll tap you four times on the top of the helmet and off you go."

Tad nodded and glanced at Kit. His chum pointed to another suit lying ready. "I'll come down if you need me," he said simply.

"Take it slow," Gridley warned him. "Swallow hard as you are lowered down and don't let your life line or your air hose get too slack. It will take two minutes to lower you down; so don't get alarmed. Keep your head."

The face plate was then screwed on and one of the

hands gave him an electric torch of a peculiar kind. Gridley himself lashed a wicked-looking knife to his wrist. Then he was assisted to the short ladder that went down the launch's side. When he was half submerged, he saw the old skipper's eyes peering at him through the heavy glass. Then came the customary taps on the top of the copper helmet and he slipped away into the water.

For the first fifteen feet he saw clearly. Then the darkness that envelops the depths began to rise about him and as he slowly descended he began to feel those qualms which none but a diver can know. Would the men at the pump keep busy? Would the watchman at the life line respond instantly to his signals? And what was below him?

A minute later he was in utter darkness, with some invisible current tugging at him. He felt himself swept away with this as a leaf is blown before a wind. He turned on his torch and its feeble gleam lit up a queer, elliptical space in front of him. Then his leaden-weighted feet touched the soft sand and he gave one tug on the life line. His shoes sank into sand that was constantly in motion, like a tide. He recalled the old captain's warning to keep his head. He breasted the tide as best he could, stumbled along a few paces and found the cable which, he knew, belonged to the *Shearwater*.

But in which direction did the wreck lie? He found he could lift a couple of links of the cable with ease. But there was no tension, no indication in which direction she lay. And he had lost his own sense of direction. He did not know which way was seaward nor which

shoreward. He stood there in the pit murk, with the air bubbling out of the valve in his helmet, and puzzled over the problem. Finally it struck him that the upper current set inshore; naturally the lower one would cast seaward. So he threw the faint gleam of his torch on the cable and followed it with the current. He observed that the water got deeper. He signaled for more scope of air hose and life line and descended a small slope, covered with queer, worn pebbles, here and there a huge boulder protruding. The cable lay in huge loops, half buried here and there in the sand, showing that there was no drag on it.

But to Tad another matter was becoming of great concern: a pain over his eyes was blinding him, his ears were aching frightfully, and he felt waves of nausea coming over him. A diving suit is not the place to be sick in and Tad used all his will power to keep himself steady and composed. Then his torch seemed a poor affair. It lit up but a small space ahead of him and when he turned it down on the bottom on which he was painfully walking, it showed only a kind of murky, dirty flood in which he was knee-deep. His chest began to hurt him and he realized that he was near the limit of his strength. But he kept on.

Just when he was about to give up and signal to be hauled to the surface, he came with a bump against a huge mass, barnacle-covered, weedy, pretentious. But in its great bulk there was an opening and from this the cable issued.

Tad understood that he had found the *Shearwater*, upside down. Evidently she had turned turtle during the gale and quietly sunk into the comparatively un-

troubled depths, bottom up. A moment's investigation showed the lad that her rails were deeply buried in the shifting sand, that she presented no single opening by which he could enter her holds or explore what was left of her cabins. She lay stranded on that shelving floor like a great whale. With some effort he managed to climb up to her keel. It was almost level.

Tad now signaled to be hauled up. When the life line came taut he yielded to the drowsiness that afflicted him until an increasing pain over his eyes and in his ears made him aware of the warning that had been given him. He swallowed as fast as he could, though the ascent seemed interminable. At last the water took on a faintly luminous tinge, then he felt the impulse of the surface waves and was finally dragged on board the launch, inert and helpless.

Lying on the heaving deck, the hands soon unscrewed his face plate. The fresh air revived him instantly. Then the heavy helmet was unscrewed and he saw Gridley bending over him.

"She lies bottom side up," Tad told him hoarsely.

A queer look of unwilling admiration came over the old mariner's face. "I never knew a chap make eighty feet the first time," he said. "And a nasty tide at that. We'll buoy the wreck and go home."

Tad, relieved of his heavy dress, sat up and stared about him. Kit Carson was at the wheel of the diving launch and an ugly sea was making from the south'ard.

"You'll have a nice time crossing Yaquina Bay bar," Tad remarked. "Funny, I didn't feel any waves down there—only a kind of muddy current that nearly took me off my feet."

Gridley nodded and the launch's engines began to throb and the little vessel herself to plunge heavily in the running seas.

A long look shoreward told Tad that the rising spume and spindrift had obscured all landmarks. But from the north they heard the faithful, steady tolling of the bell buoy and a few minutes later reached it. From then on Gridley himself took the wheel and an hour later, after being swept by a couple of huge combers without special damage, they sailed into the placid waters of the bay and came to their moorings.

Wellander met them, his bronzed face grimly set. He took one look at Tad's white face and then drew Gridley aside.

"How did the boy make it?" he demanded.

Gridley slapped his thigh resoundingly. "Like an old timer! He found the *Shearwater* in eighty feet of water and we buoyed the wreck as neat as could be."

"Did he find out what shape she was in?" the inspector went on.

"Bottom side up," was the response. "That means either raising her or cutting a hole in her hull to get the stuff out." Gridley turned his bleak eyes on the two boys. "Do you breed many of that kind in your service?"

Wellander did not answer this query. "How much do the boys get?" he demanded.

Gridley answered promptly, "Twenty a day, every time they go down."

"*And* one half the proceeds," the inspector added as promptly.

For a moment the two men's eyes met and Gridley

was the first to lower his gaze. "I'd ha' made 'em a present," he mumbled.

Wellander laughed shortly. "You're a hard man, Captain Gridley. But I'm a harder one. Twenty-five dollars to each boy when he goes down and one half the proceeds. That's final."

Gridley hesitated a moment, then let his seamed and leathery visage soften into a grin. "It's a bargain," he said quietly. "But what of the other lad—Carson—I don't know how he'll turn out."

"He's been tested," was the simple reply. "Let the two work together. They'll do better—and deep-sea diving isn't good for a man by himself. I've done it. Years ago I worked for Trinity House. It's a man's job. If they were just ordinary boys, I'd never let you have 'em. But—I want just such lads for the service. And their families need the money." Wellander lowered his tones. "You don't need the money, Captain. What do *you* want off the *Shearwater?*"

Gridley's face hardened. "I had a son myself once," he muttered. "A bright and handy lad. He didn't turn out—as he should." He lifted defiant eyes to the other man. "Maybe it was my fault. But he lost the *Shearwater.*"

"The skipper's name was Soules," Wellander whispered.

"He took his mother's name," was the reply. "After I split with him. And I buried him up yonder in the graveyard on the hill," he went on more softly. "Read the service over him, and now——"

"And now——"

"I'm going to bring the old packet into port. My—my son wasn't up to it. But I'll report for him, because, in a way, I think it was all my fault. Meanwhile——"

"You're risking the lives of two boys whose fathers made a record in my service," the inspector finished.

Gridley shook his head. "Not I. Isn't my record clear? Did I ever make port with man or cargo amiss? I've a suit of my own on board and if anything happens, you can be certain Gridley is down there with 'em. And, as you say, I'm making men for your service, the kind of men who can go it alone."

Wellander nodded. "You think you can raise her?" he asked.

At this moment Tad and Kit passed on their way home. Gridley halted them and drew out his wallet. "By the way," he said gruffly. "You each get twenty-five dollars a day." He paid each the money. Tad showed his astonishment. But Gridley's iron face did not alter. "It'll be both of you the next day that gives us a fair chance," he said, and turned to the inspector.

Ten days later the storm had abated and only a heavy swell on the bar marked its passing. Gridley sailed promptly at daybreak with both boys eager and anxious to earn another twenty-five dollars. With them went the captain's big launch, towing two decked barges. In response to the boys' curiosity, they got the dry answer that an attempt would be made to lift the *Shearwater* to the surface. An old seaman explained to them the process:

"You'll go down and pass some big chains under the

hulk and we'll heave the free ends up, both port and starboard. Then we'll heave in till the weight is off the wreck and tow inshore to shallow water."

Tad and Kit listened and wondered. But when they had picked up the buoy that marked the wreck and were ready to go down, Gridley himself gave them their instructions.

They were brief but explicit. The boys were to go down and wait for light chains to be lowered to them. Then they were to tunnel under the wreck and drag the chains after them, one just abaft the fo'c'sle head and one just at the break of the poop.

All this sounded simple and Kit was wild to be away. But Tad, who had had his experience, bit his lip and said nothing. One went down one side of the launch and one the other.

Tad reached the bottom to find himself strangely oppressed with fear. The very thought of digging into the sand under the rail of the overturned vessel and crawling on through made him physically ill. But as soon as the light chain came down he started to work, as agreed, under the break of the poop deck. The work was easy. As fast as he scooped out the sand it was carried away by the current and in a quarter of an hour he had made his way down under the wreck. Yet here he was seized by a queer sensation. He was in a hole barely large enough to let him pass and he had to pull and tug on air hose and life line to get them through. Above him he felt a slight, almost imperceptible quivering of the deck, a sort of tremor of the hull, as though it were barely balanced. And all the time his electric flash light showed him a steady cur-

rent of sand flowing by him, glimmering and sinister. He reached the foot of the after mast and crawled by it. Another twenty feet took him into the rail and he dug furiously under it, so that he exhausted himself. When he emerged with the light chain after him, he was suffused with perspiration, his lungs were gorged with blood, and he felt himself becoming unconscious. With his final strength he made the chain fast to a small line let down from above and, once clear of the wreck, he gave the signal to be hauled up.

He revived on the deck of the diving launch, with Captain Gridley bending over him.

"Where is Kit?" he demanded.

Gridley grinned. "Just signaled," he said. Then he added, "I'm going down after him."

Tad lay and breathed deeply of the cool air flowing through the open face piece. It was some time before he recognized the fact that Gridley had vanished. He watched the men at the air pumps dully, hardly understanding what they were doing. Then the pain slowly ebbed from his eyes and ears and he went to sleep. He wakened to see them haul a figure on board that could be none other than Kit. He crawled feebly over and peered down at the white face that showed through the open helmet. A moment later Gridley came to the surface and was dragged aboard.

A quarter of an hour later all three were out of their diving dresses and drinking hot coffee. A glance told Tad that both chains had been carried under the sunken hull and made fast to the light barges in easy hitches. Gridley's face was a study. His lined, homely, and stern countenance bore an expression of satisfac-

tion mingled with anxiety. He gulped his coffee eagerly, as one seeking strength. The two boys watched him in a kind of stupor till he turned on them and said, "You'll do, Sheldon, you made it. I found Carson caught under the forward hatch with a kink in his air line. But as soon as I cleared him he followed me on through. The rest is easy."

"What is easy?" Tad demanded.

"Towing the wreck into shallow water," was the reply. Gridley got to his feet on the heaving deck and gave an order. Heavier cables were made fast to the light chains and the busy winch hummed. Inside twenty minutes two heavy chains had taken the place of the light ones the boys had carried under and at dusk work ceased.

By dinner time the boys had recovered both appetites and spirits and enjoyed the consideration shown them by the other members of the crew. They had proved themselves master divers.

The following day, as the weather was good, Captain Gridley completed his preparations. He now had the wreck slung in heavy chains and the two boys made a descent together to see that all was well. At noon they returned to Newport and took in tow two heavy barges which had been used in the construction of the jetty that stretches out into the Pacific on either side of the bar. They were loaded with rock and proved a heavy tow to the spot where the other barges marked the wreck. But at nightfall both were in place, one on either side of the wreck, and the cable ends made fast to strong bollards.

That night Captain Gridley never left the deck of

his own launch, watching the barometer, scanning the starlit sky, muttering to himself whenever a heavy roller rose out of the sea and strained his apparatus. At dawn he set all hands to work throwing the rock out of the two barges. At noon both were half empty and lifting on the wreck with a force of many tons. He summoned Tad.

"You'll have to go down again," he said quietly. "See just how matters are below. If my calculations are correct, the *Shearwater* is almost afloat. But I must be certain."

Tad went down, carefully avoiding the taut cables that reached up from the bottom, and finally landed alongside the wreck. To his amazement his electric torch showed him that the bow had been raised four or five feet. Only the stern remained embedded in the sand. He tested the chains with his hands and found them immovable under the strain. One thing he observed that made him think hard: the current, now setting seaward, was steadily washing the sand from under the wreck.

"Another day would clear the stern," he thought. So he signaled to be hauled up and reached the surface safely. Gridley listened to his report quietly.

"You won't have to go down again, I hope," he told the lad. "From now on it will be ticklish work and nobody can foretell just what will happen." He went on and explained that when the *Shearwater* turned turtle her cargo of heavy castings had doubtless shifted and now rested on the lower side of the deck, leaving a large space in the hull. "If that is filled with water, we are helpless," Gridley concluded. "But

if there is plenty of air there we may be able to do what I hoped to do."

"You can pump air in," Kit suggested.

Gridley shook his head. "That would mean you two boys going down and boring a hole next the keel and fastening an air hose in it. And heaven only knows what might happen while you were doing it. I'm going to try to drag the wreck into deeper water and see whether she will float."

With both diving launch and Gridley's own powerful vessel hitched to a hawser, the four barges lifting to the limit of their capacity, they began their attempt, not, as at first planned, to tow the wreck into shallow water, but to take it out into deeper water where it would hang slung in the chains and be in a position to be dragged anywhere.

At first the trial seemed a failure. Then the stern apparently drew clear and the whole outfit stood to sea, making a scant two miles an hour, but with a three-knot tide adding its rate to this. When they had towed the wreck two miles out into one hundred and sixty feet of water, Captain Gridley slowly swung his towing vessels toward the bar. At the same time he gave orders to lighten the lifting barges still more by throwing out the rock with which they were still half filled.

This maneuver succeeded up to a point where all four barges began to list inward dangerously, and the chain fastenings showed signs of yielding. But Gridley kept his course inward without a sign of discomposure, only ordering all his helpers off the barges and on to the towing launch. Tad and Kit watched pro-

ceedings eagerly. Some subtle sense told them that Gridley suspected an accident which would alter all plans. It came when a huge roller swept in from the mist-covered sea. The two barges on the starboard side suddenly careened, filled, and turned turtle.

In all the excitement Gridley alone seemed undisturbed. He kept his machines going full speed, even though the barges on the port side appeared in instant danger of turning over, too. And then to the boys' amazement the chains slackened all around and both the barges which floated upside down and those still upright surged wildly as the strain slacked.

A moment later a huge swirl in the sea marked something rising and as the launches chugged steadily on the wreck came to the surface, like a huge whale, showed the belly of its hull for a moment, and lurched over. In its sweep to an even keel it sank the two starboard barges with a tremendous crashing of timbers, rolled furiously a moment and then settled down, right side up.

A gaping hole in the deck showed where tons of the heavy castings had broken their way through into the sea, relieving the vessel of much of the weight that held it.

From this instant Captain Gridley became another man. It was clear that the *Shearwater* was barely afloat and that her slight buoyancy might be destroyed at any time by some sweeping roller. With a voice of incredible ferocity, Gridley ordered his men to get into small boats and cut away the chains that still held the wreck to the barges. At the same time he stopped his engines and allowed both launches to come along-

side the hulk. Under his swift, competent orders the hawser was got in and fresh lines made fast so that a launch rode on either side. Then he started ahead again.

"She draws a good twenty-eight feet as she is," he told Tad quietly. "We haven't any pumps to clear the water in her hold. But if she'll float twenty minutes we can beach her just inside the South Jetty where she'll lie as sweet as a bird in a nest. Then we can salvage the rest of the cargo and, weather permitting, haul her off later and into port."

That twenty minutes seemed an interminable time to the boys. The *Shearwater* rose and fell sluggishly as they steamed along; and as roller after roller came on, Gridley bade his men stand by with axes to cut the lines if the wreck filled and started to sink. But luck held. The bar was smooth as glass and presently Gridley cast off the lines of the diving launch and ordered it out again, just as they came abreast of the seaward end of the jetty. With his own vessel he hung on, using all his power.

They passed the jetty end and were within a hundred yards of the breakers when Gridley cast off the last lines and put his own engines astern to keep his launch from taking the beach. The *Shearwater,* with the momentum she had been given, drove steadily on, rose to the first breaker, dived, rose again, was caught in a sweeping sea and carried irresistibly onward till she crashed into the rockwork of the jetty, stopped, heeled over, and filled. There she lay, motionless.

Tad and Kit grinned at each other. The trestle

which the engineers had used in building the jetty was still pretty well intact and the wreck lay alongside it, upright, ready to be emptied of what cargo remained.

As they rounded the jetty and sailed in over the bar, Gridley stared back over his shoulder at the *Shearwater*. A queer, sardonic smile cracked his lined visage and his keen and piercing eyes were a little dimmed.

Inspector Wellander met them at the landing. "I see you changed your plans at the last moment," he remarked, after glancing at the boys.

Gridley nodded. "I've often had to change my plans at the last minute," he said quietly. "But I've got the old *Shearwater* where no harm can come to her and where I can get the cargo out easy."

"And what is the cargo worth?"

Gridley led the way into the pilot house and drew a big document from a drawer. "There's the manifest," he said. "I figure the value of what we can recover—we lost a lot—at one hundred thousand dollars. It's cost me sixteen thousand so far."

"And the boys?"

"I'll give 'em all I make above expenses," Gridley responded quietly. "They are good lads, a good breed."

Wellander stroked his great beard thoughtfully. "And yourself—what do you get out of it, Captain?"

Gridley met the inspector's sharp eyes steadily. "I'm going to refit and take the old packet into port," he said. "I bought the wreck for twenty-five dollars from the underwriters, so that end is cleared up."

"You'll have to work fast," the other remarked. "A winter gale such as we get off this coast sometimes will smash your old wreck to kindling."

Gridley nodded. The very next morning he had a crew of men repairing the trestle and another crew erecting a hoisting apparatus on it beside the *Shearwater*. The weather, though threatening, held good for eight days and by that time the last ton of cargo had been brought ashore and deposited on South Beach. Meanwhile the old captain had put a big anchor to seaward to hold the wreck from being driven still farther inshore. On the ninth day he steamed out and with the aid of the coast-guard crew made a hawser fast and brought the *Shearwater* into port.

That night he handed Wellander an account made out in his cramped hand.

"On account of the war the stuff brought top prices," he said. "Each of the boys gets thirty-five thousand."

The inspector stared at the figures thoughtfully. "It will educate the boys and provide for their families," he said slowly.

Gridley answered a trifle testily: "I know! But my own son had the best money could afford—and I buried him up yonder on the hill." He fixed his gleaming eyes on his visitor. "My only son!"

There was a timid knock at the door and Tad and Kit entered. They seemed oddly abashed.

"We've been thinking——" Tad began.

Kit broke in boyishly: "We'd like to help you refit this steamer and go with you to—to whatever port you're going."

Wellander gazed at them solemnly. "Captain Gridley has thirty-five thousand dollars for each of you," he remarked.

Tad flushed. "It's not the money, sir," he explained. "But we've been thinking—we thought a lot when we were down there under the wreck. We'd like to stay with Captain Gridley."

The old skipper lifted his ravaged face to their eyes. His voice was husky. But they read assent in his gleaming eyes.

Captain Wellander laid the papers he held down on the table. "You can have 'em till the service needs them," he said gruffly.

Both men fell silent, listening to the roar of the bar, beginning to break as the long-delayed storm rose. And they were like men become peaceful after long stress, their austere and stern faces a little softened; their muscular hands relaxed, their eyes fixed on distant vistas.

On the hill Tad and Kit stopped for a final glance through the darkness at the powerful flash of Cape Foulweather.

"Gale coming," Tad remarked.

Kit laughed contentedly. "What do we care?" he answered.

THE ISLAND OF FLOOEY

BY C. HILTON RICE, JR.

(In a little inland town a thousand miles from the sea, there lives a fellow named Sid Scooba. All day long Sid Scooba sits in his dingy shop mending the shoes of children as his father before him sat and mended the shoes of the children's fathers and their fathers' fathers. And as he works, the children sit silent on a bench before him as Sid Scooba tells them marvelous stories of the sea.

It does not matter that the fathers and the grandfathers wag their heads and wink their eyes at mention of Sid Scooba and his tale of Flooey Island. They tell it that Sid was a queer boy, with a fondness for queer bugs and birds and things. They laugh and say that Sid Scooba knows nothing of the sea; that he never saw the sea but once, and then through disappointed eyes as his uncle, a Norwegian sea captain, whom Sid had run away to join, left him stranded on the California coast while he, the captain, set sail for a treasure island on the other side of the world. They tell it that his mother went for Sid and brought him home after two months, ragged and penniless, and when old man Scooba died she set Sid at his bench to mend shoes for children.

There are some who believe Sid Scooba's story and some who do not. Sid says he does not care what peo-

ple say. He claims that once in his youth he saw the sea and he sailed that sea, and when the ship was wrecked, he and a blue-eyed sailor boy named Bill drifted ashore on the strangest kind of little island which they named Flooey Island.

Sid's memory always is hazy about the details of the ship and the voyage itself, but he says the more questions that are asked him about Flooey Island the more clearly does he recall the queer creatures he and Bill saw there.

Whatever be the truth about Sid Scooba, here follows the story of Flooey Island as Sid himself tells it.)

Part I

FOR days and days the ship, with its white sails set, ran with the wind like a dead leaf across a mill pond. And then, one black night, somewhere toward the bottom side of the earth where ships seldom go, the storm struck us. I don't remember just how it all happened, but next morning Bill, a blue-eyed Swedish boy, and I found ourselves alone in a boat on the ocean. The ship, with the captain and the crew, was gone. There wasn't any sign of the storm. The sun was shining and a nifty little breeze was blowing.

There wasn't anything to do but to sail on with the wind; so Bill and I set up an oar for a mast and made a sail out of our clothes. Bill was a brave lad and reckless. When the sail filled with the breeze he stood up in the boat, stark naked, and looked out over those leagues on leagues of water and sang as loud as he could:

"We're sailing o'er the ocean blue,
Yo ho, in a boat for two."

And then he looks at me and laughs.

"This wind's going somewhere," he says, gay and careless. "We'll follow her to some strange land, eh, Sid?"

"Yea, Bo!" I says. "And when we get home we'll have something to tell about, eh, Bill?"

"Yea, Bo!" he says, and we both laughed, way out there on the ocean.

Then Bill made up some more verses and we sang our challenge to the sea:

"Two boys sailed over the rolling sea,
And one was you and one was me;
And we swore our sail should never be furled
Till we had sailed to the end of the world—
Yo ho, in a boat for two!"

"That sounds like Stevenson, doesn't it, Sid?" laughed Bill proudly.

"Sounds better'n Stevenson," I says, "because this is sure enough and his is in a book."

After a while we quit singing and got serious because we didn't have no food nor water and the sun was getting hot and we began to get thirsty and hungry. Then we began to wish it would rain, but wishing didn't do no good and the more we wished the thirstier we got. Late in the afternoon Bill got so thirsty he dipped up some warm sea water and tried to drink it and it made him sick.

"I wonder why there's so much water sloshin' round the world that ain't fittin' to drink?" says Bill.

I told Bill I didn't know, but that there was a spring near my home that poured out more fresh, sweet water than the whole town could drink. Then Bill told me about a small river in his country that ran more good water than a million men could drink, even if the men all laid down on their stomachs along the banks and drank all day and night. Until late that night Bill and I planned how we would build a house by that river and live there the rest of our lives.

All night we ran before the wind and the next morning our tongues were so dry we could hardly talk. Then both of us stood up and looked all about but we couldn't see no signs of land.

"How long can a fellow live without water?" asked Bill in a dry whisper.

I told him I once read about a man who lived a week, and after a while Bill smiled and said: "Well, we oughter be across this desert in less than a week."

We sat quiet for a long time; then Bill spoke again.

"You know, Sid," he said cheerfully, like he'd thought of something good, "you ain't near so thirsty if you don't keep thinking about it all the time. And we ain't perished yet, not by a long sight. We're liable to get saved somehow if we don't let ourselves die from just thinking about water. I've just been thinking what we ought to do when we are saved. When we build that house by the river we can keep a barrel full of water on hand, and if we should have to leave the river any time we could roll the barrel along with us."

"We ain't never going to leave that river," I says.

"Tell me some more about that fellow that lived a week. Did he finally get some water?" says Bill.

"It's a strange story, Bill," I says. "I read about that fellow in a book that he wrote himself. He was adrift in a boat on the ocean all by himself, just like we are. He went a whole week without water, and then a fish saved him."

"What kind of a fish?" grinned Bill.

"A camel fish," I says. "He's the rarest fish what is and few folks has even seen one. He's a fresh-water fish that crosses the ocean once every fifty years. He's got two big humps on his back, like a camel, and when he gets ready to cross the ocean he fills up those humps with fresh water to drink on his way over. In the ocean the camel fish always swims on the surface with the two humps of water on his back sticking up like goldfish bowls."

"Well, I'll be dogged!" says Bill, "and that fellow caught a camel fish?"

"That's what he done," I says. "He was lying down looking over the side of the boat at all the water that wasn't fittin' to drink, and he drifted right alongside of one of them camel fish that was asleep on the surface. Before that fish could wake up, the fellow had grabbed him by the gills and dragged him into the boat and busted his brains out with an oar. Then he opened those humps and found about a quart of water in each one, and that water kept him alive until a ship picked him up three days later."

For a long time Bill set there thinking; then he says:

"Was that an old book you read that in?"

"Yes, it was an old book," I says.

"About fifty years old?" he says.

"Just about fifty years old," I answered.

Bill's eyes got bright and he stood up and looked all about the ocean.

"Sid," he says solemnly, "if that happened fifty years ago, it's time for those camel fishes to be crossing again. I'll keep watch for a while and you watch awhile and maybe we'll see one."

So we took turns keeping watch. All day long we watched. We didn't talk no more because the sun was blazing hot and our tongues were dry and fuzzy like corncobs, and Bill's eyes were beginning to look dull and sunk back in his head. Along about sundown Bill gave me a sudden kick and pointed at something in the water.

"Is that him, or ain't it?" he says.

"Bust my halyards if it ain't him!" I says. "Careful there, Bill. I'll steer alongside and you grab him."

There was the camel fish asleep on the water, not twenty yards from us, with his two half-gallon humps of water showing as plain as day. He was a young fish, about as big as a seven-year-old boy, and when we eased up close we could see his gills slowly open and close while he breathed.

Bill watched his chance and when the fish opened his gills wide Bill ran his hand and arm clear up to his elbow through that fish's gills and out through his mouth. Then Bill yanked him into the boat and the fish woke up and we had a terrible scuffle until I busted his skull with an oar. Then we cut a little hole in each one of those humps and turned the fish up and started to drinking. There was about three pints of clear

fresh water in each hump and we drank every drop without stopping. Soon as our thirst was satisfied, we found we were hungry; so we ate all the raw fish we could hold. It was getting dark then and Bill stretched himself and says:

"I'm so full of water and food I don't feel like I ever will want any more. Let's throw the rest of the fish overboard and go to sleep."

So we threw the fish into the ocean and laid down side by side and went to sleep, leaving the boat to drift as the winds and the sea would have it.

When we woke up, the morning sun was shining in our faces and right out there before us, not hardly a half mile away, was the prettiest little island the eyes of man ever saw. All green and white, it rose up out of the sea like a huge dish of spinach, with white limestone rocks showing through the green like the white of eggs.

Me and Bill exchanged looks of deep thanksgiving. Then we took down our sail and put our clothes back on, for we couldn't land among strangers naked.

We landed on a sandy beach as clean and white as snow and stood for several minutes looking across the sand at the fringe of green trees and white rocks a hundred yards away. We didn't see a sign of life anywhere.

"We'd better be careful," I says. "Maybe this is a savage island. I don't see no signs of houses or nothing."

"Maybe it's a cannibal island," whispers Bill. "Let's stay here at the boat a minute and holler 'hello.' If they come out and seem friendly, they might make us

kings. If they start throwing spears at us, we can beat it back into the ocean."

"All right," I says, "but let's get some water first."

There was a little stream of clear, fresh water that trickled across the beach not far from us; so we drank a lot of water and then slipped back to the boat and hollered "hello" several times, loud as we could. But nothing answered, not even a bird; so we walked slow and careful across the beach.

The first trees we came to were a row of cocoanut palms. We found a lot of cocoanuts on the ground; so Bill ate one and I ate one. Then we looked around and found a little tree with fruit on it that looked like great big figs and that had a soft pulp in it that tasted just like baked sweet potato. We were eating some of the potato fruit when all of a sudden there was a "br-r-r-r-zip!" as something left the ground right between our legs.

Bill jumped about four feet in the air. "What the Sam Hill?" he says.

"That was some funny kind of bird," I says. "I saw him when he got up and he went out of sight so quick it looked like he went through a hole in the sky."

"Gee, Christmas!" says Bill. "I thought I'd stepped on a cannibal."

We stood looking at the sky out over the ocean, the way the bird went, and in just about a minute we heard a whistling sound and that bird flashed up in the air before us. He was going so fast that he hit the sand and turned about four sommersets and knocked himself kinda foolish. Before he came to his senses, me and Bill grabbed him. He was the strangest bird

you ever heard of. He was about as big as a half-grown chicken and built like a sausage, with three sets of wings, one set behind the other. And he had asbestos feathers.

"No wonder he can fly so fast," I says. "He's got three sets of wings and can fly just three times as fast as the fastest bird in the world."

"And look at his funny feathers," says Bill.

Bill didn't know much about science and was slow to figure things out for himself; so I had to explain to him that down in the tropics where we were the air was hot most of the time, that a bird that could fly three or four hundred miles an hour would catch on fire from the friction if he had ordinary feathers. That's why nature put asbestos feathers on the six-winged birds.

"Turn him loose and let me see him fly," says Bill.

So I turned the asbestos bird loose on the ground and he was tame as a pet chicken. He walked around a minute on his little short legs like a duck, looking at us out of one eye; then he went over to a low, scrubby bush and pecked off a couple of red berries that looked like pepper. Soon as he swallowed the berries he gave a sudden flutter and was gone out over the sea and straight up in the air.

"Must be something in those berries that put speed into him," says Bill.

So me and Bill picked a couple of berries and tasted them. No sooner had we bit into them than we both let out a yell and beat it for the creek. Those berries must have been made out of concentrated mustard oil and brimstone; they tasted like a hornet's sting. By

the time we got to the creek our tongues were blistered and we could smell the burnt flesh. We dived into the shallow creek, tongues first, and finally got them cooled off.

"Sid, that bird must have asbestos insides, too," says Bill when he got so he could talk.

"No, that's the trouble," I explained to Bill. "He's got regular insides. Soon as he swallows a couple of those hot tamale pills he uses his speed to get up about forty thousand feet where the air is below zero, and where he can fly around with his mouth open to cool off his insides. A bird with only two wings couldn't get that high quick enough."

Bill was dull in some ways but smart in others. He thought awhile; then he says:

"Sid, has anybody ever seen or heard tell of a six-winged asbestos bird that flies like a cannonball?"

"No, nobody in the whole world," I says.

"Then blamed if we haven't discovered a new island and a new kind of bird," says Bill. "And by right of discovery this island and all that is on it is ours, and we ought to set up our claim right now. We'll claim it first and then we'll explore it and name it."

So Bill found a pencil in his pocket and tore off a piece of his shirt-tail and made a flag. Then he drew a picture of the asbestos bird on the flag and we signed our names to it; then we tied the flag to a long stick and set the stick up in the sand. Bill said he worked in a big lawyer's office once and he knew how to make a claim legal; so he told me what to say, and we both took our caps off and put up our right hands and says together:

"Know all men by these presents: In the names of the United States and Sweden, parties of the first part, and Bill and Sid, parties of the second part, we do hereby and forever claim this island, so help us."

"Now," says Bill, "this island is ours by right of discovery. All we got to do now is to conquer it; then it will be ours by right of conquest, and those two rights will close the deal. If there're any cannibals here, we'll scare the daylights out of them when we tell them who we are. Then we'll set up a government and I'll be King Bill I, and you'll be King Sid I, and we'll lie in a couple of hammocks under the cocoanut palms and watch the waves roll in while the cannibals fan the flies off us."

"Yes," I says. "That's fine; but how are you going to tell the cannibals who we are when we can't talk cannibal talk?"

"Well, we can act like kings," says Bill. "If they can't understand us and try to get rough, we'll call out the Swedish Navy and the United States Army. I guess that'll impress 'em."

"How are you going to get a message to the Navy and the Army?" I says.

You couldn't stump Bill. He thought a minute; then, right off the bat, he says:

"We could write a note and put it in a cocoanut and throw the cocoanut in the ocean. Somebody would be bound to find it and send it to Sweden or America."

"But how are they going to find us if they get the message?" I says. "We don't know ourselves where we are; so how are they going to know?"

"Well," says Bill, "we can tell them in the note that

we are somewhere southeast of the Equator; and then when they start looking for us they can see our flag."

That sounded reasonable; so we didn't bother about it any more and started out to explore and conquer the island.

We hadn't gone far up the beach when we found the skull of some kind of big fish. Bill poked at the skull with his toe and soon as he did we heard a funny kind of hissing noise, like air leaking out of a tire, and a thin, green fog began to rise up out of that skull. Bill poked the skull again and a queer kind of crab backed out and, spewing out a stream of green fog, shot backward across the beach.

Some of the greenish fog, that was strong like the fumes of ammonia, got into Bill's nose and eyes and he went blind, and got to sneezing and coughing. I had to grab his hand and lead him back to the creek where he bathed his eyes in cool water.

When Bill got so he could see again, he was mad as a hornet.

"Sid," he says, "no kind of man nor animal can spit in my eye on Swedish territory and get by with it. If I see that crab again I'm going to bust him one with a cocoanut."

We had just started around the island again when we saw something coming toward us from out of the woods about fifty yards away. At first it looked like a little old man, about three feet high, limping along on crutches. When we got closer we saw it wasn't a man at all, but a strange kind of turtle. He had a long shell, broad at the top and narrow at the bottom, like a two-stick kite, and he had two long arms and two

short legs and stood straight up and used his arms like crutches, swinging his body between them.

He came on slow and deliberate, like a crippled man, till he got in about twenty feet of us; then he stopped and looked us over, his little head sticking up like a doorknob and his whole manner saying plain as day:

"Well, where are you from and what do you want?"

We could see he was an old turtle, must have been two hundred years old, and we stood there looking at him and him at us; then the turtle pointed to the sea with his right arm.

"Look, Bill," I says. "He's ordering us off the island."

"Better go on, you old fool terrapin, before I give you a swift kick," says Bill, who was still sore at what the crab had done to him.

The old turtle put his arms down and blinked his eyes at us; then he pulled his feet into his shell and started to swinging his body between his crutches like a pendulum. When he did that, Bill, who never did understand animals, commenced to laugh, "Ho! ho! Ha! ha!"

The turtle put his feet down again and stood there looking straight at Bill till Bill quit laughing; then the turtle opened his mouth and imitated Bill laughing, only he didn't make no sound.

"He's mocking you, Bill," I says. "Don't make him mad. He ain't no ordinary turtle."

"I'm not going to bother him," says Bill, "but if he gets fresh with me, I'll take him by his tail and throw him in the ocean."

Maybe the old turtle understood what Bill said, and maybe he didn't; but he started back across the beach, walking on his crutches like a tired old man. Every few feet he'd stop and turn around and mock us, like Bill laughed at him, only he didn't make no sound. When he got to the cocoanut trees he stopped again and let out a kind of squawk.

"Look out, Bill. That's some kind of signal!" I says.

But Bill was always hot-headed, and he jumped up and hollered at the turtle:

"Better go on, you old stiff! I'll come over there and ram that knob of your'n so far down in your shell it'll take a corkscrew to pull it out!"

No sooner had Bill spoke than we heard a funny kind of whistling sound coming, and Bill ducked just as something went singing over his head—"floo-eee-ee-e!"

"What was that?" says Bill. "A spear with a whistle on it?"

"No, it was some kind of an arrow with a fuzzy ball and wings on it," I says.

Then we heard another "floo-eee-ee-e," and we flattened out on the beach as the same kind of arrow grazed Bill's back and stuck in the sand about four feet away. Then we saw it wasn't an arrow at all, but a queer kind of bird that had his bill stuck in the sand clear up to his eyes and was wiggling to get loose like a chicken pulling a worm out of a hole. He had long, keen legs, about a foot long, and a tiny little body, no bigger than a sparrow, and wings that buzzed like a bumble-bee. When I grabbed him and pulled his bill out of the sand we saw it was just about a foot long, shaped like a bayonet and sharp as a razor.

"Holy smoke," says Bill, his eyes sticking out. "If he'd a-struck me with that ice-pick he'd a-flown clear through me!"

"Beat it for the woods!" I says.

I lit out for the woods followed by Bill, who was holding the bird by the neck. Just as we got into a clump of scrubby trees a whole flock of the same kind of birds come zipping by—floo-ee! floo-ee! and they just kept a-shooting by, up and down the beach outside the tree line.

"What kind of bird do you call 'em, Sid?" says Bill, holding up his bird by the neck.

"That's a flooey bird," I says. "He's named for the sound he makes when he flies."

"Well, I'll be dogged!" says Bill. "How does he make that funny sound?"

Then I showed Bill what he hadn't seen. On the bird's bill, right out in front of his eyes, was a kind of a little spin wheel, like an airplane propeller. When the bird was still it looked like a pair of spectacles, but when he got to flying fast it spun around and made a sound like *floo-ee.*

"You funny little devil," says Bill to the bird, who was scratching at Bill's arm with his claws. "I've got a great mind to choke your eyeballs out!"

"No, don't hurt 'im," I says. "Put him down and let's watch what he does."

Bill put the bird down and he stood for about a minute kind of groggy; then, quick as a flash, he gave a peck and stuck his sharp bill in the back of Bill's thigh.

Bill went straight up and come down fighting mad, but the bird had left. His keen legs flying, his wings buzzing, and his long bill sticking straight out in front, he taxied across the beach for about twenty yards, then rose in the air and was gone.

"Say, Sid," says Bill, pulling his clothes down to see his wound, "what the Sam Hill kind of an island is this?"

"I don't know, yet," I says, looking at Bill's wound that looked like he'd been stabbed with a pen knife. "Does it hurt much?"

"I reckon it does," says Bill. "Feels like a catfish finned me."

For about an hour we stayed in the clump of bushes while Bill rolled around on the ground and groaned.

"Bill," I says, when he began to get easy. "I believe that old turtle gave the flooey bird the signal to attack us. He ain't no regular turtle. He's king of this island."

"King!" says Bill, commencing to laugh. "Say, Sid, if I thought that rusty old cuss sicked those birds on me, I'd——"

Before he got the rest of the words out, we heard another squawk up the island and here come another flock of flooey birds shooting over our heads and out along the beach.

"Shut up!" I says to Bill. "Cut out that laughing and quit making that turtle mad. If we get off here alive we've got to make friends with him."

"We've got to make soup with him," says Bill. "No turtle can be king over me. We've got to conquer this island or die in the attempt. And I'd rather die here,

stuck full of flooey birds, than go crazy out yonder on the ocean chasing camel fish."

"We've got to stay here," I says, "but not by big talk. We've got to use common sense and strategy. If you don't believe it, look what happened to that fellow behind you."

Bill looked and gave a gasp. Not six feet behind him was the skeleton of a man. We crawled up close and saw it had the high, broad skull of a white man; and sticking clear through the skull was the long, keen bill of a dead flooey bird. The bird must have struck him out on the open beach and the poor fellow had crawled in under the trees to die.

When Bill had had a good look at the skeleton, he was willing to listen to me. I told him I knew all about strange things and he didn't; that he had already got hurt by a crab and a bird and had offended the turtle. I told him we were on a most wonderful island that no man had yet discovered and lived to tell about. I told him there ought to be other strange animals that no one had ever seen and that we owed it to our countries to see all we could and then, more than all, we had to live to tell about it.

Then I explained to Bill that some animals have sensitive feelings and can't stand to be laughed at, and that we must be careful not to abuse or kill any animal unless we absolutely had to.

"All right," says Bill. "What do we do next?"

"Well," I says, "the next thing is to catch all of those flooey birds and tie them up so we can move around the island without getting our skulls punctured."

Bill grinned at me like he thought I'd gone crazy.

"Say, Sid," he says, "if you can catch those flooey birds you can have Sweden's half of this island and be the whole cheese."

"No, I don't care about that," I says. "You just help me a minute while I try out a scheme."

"I took my pants off, tied a knot at the end of each leg, and then stuffed them full and tight with a tough grass we gathered. Then I found a stick and stuck one end of it into the knot in the pants leg.

"Now, Bill, we're ready," I says. "Open your mouth and laugh loud as you can."

Bill caught the idea and let out a laugh you could have heard a mile. Almost before he stopped laughing the old turtle squawked 'way up the island and here come the flooey birds, madder than hornets.

Right then I raised the stuffed pants up above the scrubby tree tops and in less than ten seconds those pants were stuck plumb full of flooey birds—like pins in a cushion. When we got them on the ground you never heard such buzzing and scratching, but none of them could get loose. There were thirty-seven in all, and Bill pulled their bills loose and handed them to me, one by one, while I put their bills together, half this way and half that way, like a bundle of shingles, and tied them in the middle with a string made out of Bill's shirt sleeve.

"Now laugh again," I told Bill.

Bill laughed and the old turtle squawked in answer, but not a single flooey bird showed up.

"It's just like I thought, Bill," I says; "we got them all at one swipe."

Bill looked at me and started scratching his head.

"You know, Sid," he says, "I could have stayed here a hundred years and I never would have thought of that scheme. How did you learn to figure all these things out so quick and easy?"

"Well," I says, "there are some things you can't learn; they've just got to come natural. You can catch any kind of animal or person if you'll study their habits and see what kind of bait they'll come after."

We left the bundle of flooey birds fluttering under the scrubby trees and went on our way up the island. I had just told Bill to go slow and keep his eyes peeled when we saw something drop out of one of the trees, hit the ground, and bounce right back up in the tree again.

"Did you see that, Bill?" I says.

"Yes," says Bill. "That was a rubber cocoanut."

"No, it wasn't, either," I says.

"Aw, don't tell me," says Bill, "didn't I see it?"

Just about that time a cocoanut came sailing down and busted against Bill's head.

"Ouch!" yelled Bill, holding his head and staggering around.

I caught his arm and led him from under the cocoanut trees back into the woods and sat him down on the sand. After a while he come to his senses.

"What hit me, Sid?" he says.

"A cocoanut," I says.

"Gee whiz, I didn't know my head was harder than a cocoanut!" he says.

"Well," I says, "that's one time your hard head saved you. But even at that it got you in trouble. If

you hadn't stopped to argue about that rubber cocoanut you wouldn't have got hit."

"It was a rubber cocoanut," says Bill. "It couldn't have been nothing else."

"Why?" I says.

"Well," says Bill, "it fell out of a cocoanut tree, didn't it? And there ain't nothing grows in cocoanut trees but cocoanuts, is there? And nothing can bounce like that but rubber, can it?"

"You ain't answering nothing," I says. "You are asking me questions."

"It was a rubber cocoanut," says Bill, getting stubborn.

"How could a cocoanut get rubber in it?" I says.

"Well," says Bill, "there's rubber trees, ain't there? And there's cocoanut trees, ain't there? Well, that tree could be a cross between a rubber tree and a cocoanut tree and have rubber cocoanuts on it, couldn't it?"

"Listen, Bill," I says, "you can't ever learn nothing by guessing, and you can't settle nothing by argument."

"It was a rubber cocoanut," says Bill.

"All right," I says, "I'm going to prove it couldn't have been a rubber cocoanut. Whatever it was, fell out of the top of that tree yonder, didn't it? And it fell at an angle away from the tree, didn't it? Well, if it had been rubber it would have bounced off at an angle farther away from the tree instead of bouncing back at the same angle it come from. And what's more, a rubber cocoanut or any kind of rubber ball can't bounce more than about half the distance it falls from,

and what we saw bounced all the way back to the tree top. And what's more, rubber don't bounce in soft sand. And what's still more, that cocoanut didn't fall on your head—it was thrown at you."

"Well," says Bill, "what was it we saw and who hit me with the cocoanut?"

"A spring-tail monkey," I says.

Bill looked at me kinda funny, then fell over and let out that horse laugh of his. While he was still laughing, we heard a squawk and there stood the old turtle, not hardly twenty yards away in the woods. He was standing solemn as an owl, pointing out to sea with his long arm.

"He's ordering us off the island, Bill," I says.

"Better go on, you old cooter!" says Bill, reaching for a stick.

"Be careful, Bill," I says, "be careful."

The turtle wasn't scared a bit. He put his arm down, raised his short little legs and started swinging his body between his arms like a pendulum. Soon as he did that Bill started to laughing again. Then the old turtle stopped swinging, stuck out his little knob of a head and mocked Bill's laugh, only he didn't make no sound.

Bill got mad sure enough then. He said that kind of stuff was an open insult to our flag. He said my country might stand for it, but his country didn't take nothing off nobody, much less'n off a fresh little terrapin on a ten-acre island.

"Come on, Sid," he says. "All the flooey birds are tied up, and there ain't nothing to be scared of."

"If you want to go after him, Bill," I says, "go on.

You're the only one getting hurt. If you want to get your skull busted with cocoanuts, just step out in the open."

When _ said that, Bill began to cool off and listen to reason. I told him that it was plain as day that the old turtle was trying to trap us and we would be fools to try to harm him until we got onto his game. I told him, too, that most all kinds of animals would not harm anyone unless harm was done to them, and that the old turtle might not be such a bad sort if he found out our intentions were good.

While we were talking the old turtle started walking off into the woods, going slowly away like a feeble old man on crutches. Every few yards he'd stop, turn round, and mock Bill's laugh, only he didn't make no sound. When he got 'way off he turned again and gave two squawks.

"Look out, Bill, that's a signal!" I says.

We flattened out on the sand behind a tree, and at the same time a terrible screeching and chattering started 'way up in the tops of the cocoanut trees.

"What the Sam Hill?" says Bill. "Wild hyenas?"

"No," I says. "Hyenas don't live in trees. Those are monkeys."

"I never did care for no kind of monkey business," says Bill, peeping around the tree.

I peeped around the other side and we saw the strangest kind of sight. A shower of cocoanuts came thumping down, then came the queerest kind of monkey you ever heard of. He was about the size of a regular monkey, but he had a longer tail; and he came down tail first, and when he hit the ground his tail

coiled like a bed-spring and broke the force of his fall. Soon as he landed he began to rise up and down on his tail, trying to locate us.

"Well, I'll be dad-burned!" says Bill, sticking his head out from behind the tree.

When he did that the monkey saw him and soon as he did he coiled his tail right tight, caught the lowest coil with his hands, pulled himself down hard, turned his hands loose and sailed back up into that tree like he'd been shot out of a sling-shot. Then in just about two seconds a whole flock of monkeys dropped down, landing on their tails. No sooner had they landed than each monkey grabbed a cocoanut with the end of his tail, coiled his tail like a spring and pulled the spring down tight with his hands; then all the monkeys stuck their heads in the sand, to brace themselves, aimed the cocoanuts at us and turned them loose. About twelve cocoanuts busted against the tree we were behind and the rest went whistling through the woods.

I had ducked behind the tree, but Bill was a bit slow and a cocoanut knocked the skin off his left temple.

"They're throwing curves! Beat it quick, Sid!" says Bill, getting excited.

"No, lie low and play dead," I says. "If you run, they'll knock your head off!"

We lay still as mice until the volley of cocoanuts had passed; then I peeped out. All the monkeys were raising themselves up on their tails trying to see if we were still living.

"What are they doing now?" whispered Bill, holding his head down behind the middle of the tree with both hands clamped over it.

"Lie low," I says. "They're worse scared than we are."

I knew the natural curiosity of a monkey would start them to investigating; so we lay still and watched them. In a minute or two they began to edge in a little closer and closer, raising up on their tails and stretching their necks. Once in a while a monkey would get nervous and shoot a cocoanut, and the closer they got the harder the cocoanuts busted against our tree.

"Don't let them get too close," whispers Bill. "They'll knock the dad-blasted tree down!"

"No, let 'em come on," I says. "When they get in about twenty feet, I'm going to scare the daylights out of them."

The monkeys kept coming closer and closer all in a bunch. When they got about twenty-five feet off, they began to spread out to see behind the tree. Right then I fixed my right hand in the shape of a snake's head, stuck it out from behind the tree, with a slow, wiggly motion, and started hissing like a python. Soon as I started hissing, the whole seventeen monkeys left the ground like a covey of quail and went straight up into the tops of the cocoanut trees. One monkey missed his aim, sailed clear out over the beach and landed in the ocean; and soon as he hit a shark swallowed him.

Laughing to myself, I raised up and looked for Bill. He was gone. There wasn't no sign of him anywhere. I listened for a second, but there wasn't a sound. Up

in the trees the monkeys were still as death. I called Bill's name in a loud whisper, and just as I did Bill fell out of the tree in a dead faint right on top of me.

"Jiminy Christmas!" says Bill, when he come to, "don't ever imitate a snake without telling me first."

I told Bill that the idea came to me all of a sudden and I never thought that it would scare him as much as it did the monkeys; and, besides, I didn't have time to explain.

After a while Bill got his color back and sat up and took a deep breath.

"Sid," he says kinda shame-faced, "you win the argument about the spring-tail monkeys and the rubber cocoanuts."

While the monkeys were quiet, we stayed under the trees and talked about what we better do. I told Bill that we'd have to go easy and look sharp if we didn't want to get killed. I told him we had caught all the deadly flooey birds and that I could keep the monkeys up the trees as long as I wanted, but that didn't mean we were safe. There might be other strange animals the old turtle could call to attack us.

"And, Bill," I says, "that laugh of yours is something awful. There ain't no doubt that the old turtle is king of this island, and no king could stand that haw! haw! of yours in his kingdom."

"No turtle can be king over me," says Bill.

"All right," I says. "The next time you laugh you can look out for yourself. You laughed once at the turtle and he squawked once and sent the flooey birds; you laughed again at him just now and he squawked twice and sent the monkeys; the next time you laugh

at him he's going to squawk three times and there's no telling what's coming."

Bill didn't say anything for a long time; then he felt the knot on his head where the cocoanut hit him.

"Sid," he says, "this sure is a flooey island, ain't it?"

"Yes," I says, "that's a good name for it. We'll call it Flooey Island, after the flooey birds."

It was about noon time, so we decided we'd better eat something before we went any further. There wasn't anything to eat near us but cocoanuts and Bill was scared to go after them; so I crawled toward the row of cocoanut trees and hissed like a snake. I could hear the monkeys beginning to chatter among themselves till I hissed; then you couldn't hear a sound.

I sneaked under the trees and picked up two cocoanuts and then slipped back to where Bill was. We punched holes in the eyes of the cocoanuts and drank all the milk; then we busted them and ate the meat.

"Sid," says Bill, when he was plumb full of cocoanut, "reckon there ain't nothing to eat on this island but cocoanuts and potato fruit?"

"I don't know," I says. "We've only seen a little of the island along the beach and we don't know what's farther in."

"I hope we find some ham and eggs or something," says Bill. "We're liable to be here a year or two and I can't live on monkey fruit that long."

That was Bill all over. Instead of being thankful for the cocoanuts that saved him from starving, he was tired of them already and wanted to order luxuries on that strange island.

"Bill," I says, "if you ever want to taste ham and eggs again you'd better do what I tell you and leave everything to me."

"Aw, there ain't no danger now," says Bill. "We've got the flooey birds tied up and the monkeys bluffed, and all we got to do now is to tap that old turtle on the knob and the island is ours."

"Listen, Bill," I says, "cut out the rough stuff. I've told you if we conquer this island we've got to use strategy."

"Who's pulling the rough stuff?" says Bill. "Ain't I been gassed by a crab, stabbed by a bird, hit on the head by a monkey, and mocked by a turtle?"

"Yes," I says, "but I've told you if we conquer this island, we've got to use strategy."

"That's just what I'm going to use," says Bill, picking up a big stick. "You said the next time that old turtle squawked he would squawk three times and no telling what's coming. Well, I'm going to beat 'im to it. Me and him both can't be king of this island."

I tried to argue with Bill, but it wasn't no use. He said he was born to be king of a savage island and that kind of a king wouldn't take insults from anybody.

I told Bill that the old turtle was a whole lot smarter than he thought and might not be easy to get rid of, and even if he did kill the turtle there was no telling what the animals might do in revenge. Bill said he wanted to be king and not the boss of a funny menagerie; if there wasn't any savages and regular animals on the island, he would import some cannibals and tigers and elephants and gorillas and set up a regular kingdom.

When a fellow gets drunk on his own big ideas like that, there is nothing for a friend to do but to stick with him and try to keep him out of serious trouble.

"All right, King Bill," I says; "the day is half gone. We'd better see what else is on this island before night comes."

"Sure you don't want to ask the old turtle's permission first?" Bill says scornful.

"No," I says. Just that. "No."

Just the same, it might have kept us out of some scarey trouble if I had.

Part II

BILL wouldn't listen to reason. He couldn't see danger when it was plain before him. He kept insisting: "We've got the flooey birds tied up and the monkeys bluffed, and all we got to do is to tap that old turtle on the knob and the island is ours."

(*Right there the old cobbler always stopped and sighed, and the listening boys sighed with him. They never tired of old Sid Scooba's marvelous tale of his boyhood days when he and Bill, the Swedish sailor boy, were shipwrecked on a queer little island down somewhere toward the bottom of the world. Older people might laugh and declare that Sid Scooba had never sailed the sea, but that mattered little to the boys. Over and over, they would urge the cobbler to go on with his story. And old Sid Scooba would sigh and begin again:*)

No, Bill wouldn't listen to reason. He knew that the old turtle was ruler of that island, and had sent those long-billed flooey birds to stab us and the spring-tailed

monkeys to hurl cocoanuts at us, and that probably he'd sent the crab that spewed out the stream of green fog that gassed Bill. But when I said we'd better make peace with the turtle, Bill said, no, we'd better make soup with him—no turtle could run King Bill I of the Island of Flooey. He claimed that island by right of discovery.

"Well, let's finish the exploration then," I says, seeing there was no use arguing. "We'd better see what else is on this island before night comes."

Bill wanted to go the way the old turtle went when we last saw him. But I told him he needn't worry, that the turtle was keeping an eye on us and knew everything we were doing.

We decided to go straight inland and see what was in the middle of the island. We slipped along easy and careful and had gone about two or three hundred yards when we came to a ridge of white rocks that were higher than the scrubby trees. I climbed up first and told Bill to wait.

On top of the ridge I stood up—and held my breath. It was the prettiest sight you ever saw. I could see the whole island. And right in front of me, surrounded by the ridge of snow-white rocks, was a long lake of clear green water. Out over the lake there were the strangest kind of creatures flying round, red and green butterflies with wings bigger than my hands, and long, thin, violet-colored birds that floated and swam out there in the air like snakes in the water.

I thought I was dreaming and had clear forgot about Bill until he climbed up beside me. Soon as he took his first look, his eyes lit up and he says:

"Hot dog, boy! Some kingdom, ain't it!"

That was Bill all over. He wasn't satisfied to say, "Ain't Nature wonderful?" He wanted all the world to look his way and say, "Ain't Bill's kingdom pretty!"

While we stood there we saw the old turtle near the water. He watched us a minute, then came limping toward us. When he got nearly below us, he stopped and made a little grunting noise, and three little turtles crawled out of the water and all of them stood there looking at us.

Bill wanted to heave a big rock at the whole bunch but I told him to keep quiet and watch.

When the old turtle saw we were not going to do anything, he put his feet out and his arms behind him and let himself down on his back; then he used his long arms to push himself backward into the water, just like a man launching a skiff. Soon as he was afloat, the three little turtles climbed on his breast-plate and the old turtle started rowing himself across the lake, using his arms for oars.

I knew better than to laugh, but Bill let out that "har! har!" of his. As soon as he did, the old turtle stopped rowing, raised his head, and mocked Bill laughing; then the three little turtles opened their mouths and mocked Bill, only none of them made no sound. Bill grabbed a rock and threw it and the old turtle started rowing faster. Before he could get out of range Bill threw another rock that splashed water all over the turtles. Then the old turtle raised his head and gave three long squawks and kept on rowing.

"Look out, Bill! That's a signal!" I says.

From across the lake and up and down the lake we

heard a sudden yelping like a pack of beagle hounds opening up on a rabbit's trail.

Bill was scared of any kind of dogs and thought a pack of wild wolves were after us. I told him to get in a narrow corner between two rocks and keep quiet while I watched. By the time Bill had ducked between the rocks the air was full of barking and yelping.

I climbed up on a rock so I could see. And I saw a strange sight. From all directions the dogs were heading our way. And they were coming through the air!

"What are they?" called Bill.

"Flying dogs," I says. "Keep right still and they won't bother us."

But Bill raised up his head to look.

"Flying dogs?" he says. "Who ever heard of——"

Just as Bill spoke, the leading dog sailed right over our heads, barking like fury and making a sound like a tiny airplane. Bill got one look, then ducked between the rocks.

About that time the other dogs began to arrive. Some of them hit the water and came skeeting into shore, and some landed on the ridge and ran almost against my legs before they could stop, and a few of them stayed in the air, sailing over our heads, circling and sailing back again. I stood right still and the dogs all stood off and barked and barked at me. When I didn't move, they began to quiet down and sniff around like dogs do around strangers.

"Have they gone?" says Bill.

"No," I says. "Wait till they get used to me; then you can come out."

"Say, Sid," says Bill, "how the Sam Hill do they fly?"

I told Bill that the dogs looked like spaniels except that they had a web between their front and hind legs like flying squirrels and a flat, paddle-like tail like a beaver. All they had to do to fly was to run and jump off the ground, spread their legs out wide, curve their tail like an airplane propeller and start it whirling.

While I was explaining, the dogs all quit barking; so I told Bill I thought everything was safe and he could come out.

Bill stuck his head up and soon as the dogs saw him they all started barking again and tried to get at him. I had to stand straddle of the rocks Bill was hid between to keep them off. As long as I stood there the dogs would stand off and bark, but every time I'd move they'd try to get at Bill.

I couldn't get two feet away without them trying to eat Bill up; so I tried to figure out what to do. The dogs might stay there for days keeping Bill treed between those rocks. If I left him to get cocoanuts and water, the dogs would get him; if I stayed with him, we both would die of thirst and hunger.

Bill was dull in a lot of ways but smart in others. "Sid," he says, "they'll kill me if you get a foot away. The only way out is for you to take me on your back and carry me into the woods where we can build a hut for me to stay in while these dad-blasted dogs get tame."

We decided to try it; so Bill started to climb out. Soon as he showed his head, the dogs commenced to

bark and rush at him. Before they could reach him Bill got on my back, but the trick didn't work well. Before I could take a step, the dogs started circling 'round us, barking and jumping up and snapping at Bill's feet. They made it so hot for Bill that he climbed up on my shoulders and got his legs around my neck and his arms around my head so I couldn't see nor breathe either.

While I was dancing around kicking the dogs off and trying to get Bill loose from my neck, one of the dogs that was sailing around in the air flew up from behind and nipped Bill in the back. Bill yelled, turned me loose, and dived back between the rocks. And there we were right where we started.

Soon as Bill was hid again the dogs got quiet, but they didn't leave. They sat around panting and sniffing and watching me.

All of a sudden, a thought came to me. I told Bill to stick his head above the rocks and keep it there while I made an experiment.

"Naw," says Bill. "If I stay hid, maybe those confounded air hounds will get tired and go on off."

Bill wouldn't stick his head up; so I put a hand over my mouth and practised making a certain kind of sound, very soft and low. The third time I tried I saw the nearest dog drop his head and ears and look at me like a dog does when he is ordered home. I told Bill I thought I'd hit on the right signal to make the dogs leave and if I could make them go while he was showing himself they wouldn't bother us any more; but if I made them go while he was hid they might come back soon as they saw him again.

Bill didn't like the idea much but he said he'd stick his head up just once.

He did, and the dogs started at him. Soon as they started, I made a short, sharp sound and every dog stopped, dropped his head, and backed off. They were well-trained dogs and knew how to obey orders. The dogs in the air turned and headed across the lake; then the other dogs began to take flight. They'd run along the ridge a few feet, then jump out over the lake, spread their legs wide and start their tails to whirling. When the last dog took off and was about halfway across the lake, Bill jumped out on top of the rocks and hollered at him:

"Git fer home, Bruno!"

That was Bill all over. A minute before he was begging to be saved, but now that the danger was over he was cocky as ever.

"Say, Sid," says Bill, "how the dickens did you learn what signal to give?"

"Well," I says, "I just naturally figured it out. I knew if the old turtle had different signals to send different animals after us he was bound to have a signal to call them off. He gave one long squawk for the flooey birds, two long ones for the monkeys, and three long ones for the flying dogs; so I figured that the halt signal must be just one short, sharp squawk, like all such commands."

"Well," says Bill, swelling up, "if we've got the signals that's all there is to it. We've got this island by the tail and the old turtle licked to a frazzle. Yes, sir, it means that I can start being king of Flooey Island from now on."

I wanted to get his mind off the king business; so I got him persuaded that there wasn't any hurry about being king and we ought to go on and explore the whole island.

We set out again by going down to the edge of the lake and sitting on the rocks near the water. The lake wasn't much bigger than a pond and hardly a hundred yards across. I told Bill if we would sit right quiet we would see what living things there were in and around the lake. The water was green and clear but so deep we couldn't see the bottom, but once in a while we could see the form of some queer kind of fish. We saw one fish come up near the surface that was built like a small ring. He was just one big mouth and no body at all and no tail.

Bill asked me if I ever had seen a fish like that and I told him no, but I knew what it was. It was a doughnut fish and a doughnut fish didn't have anything but a mouth and he was hungry all the time because when he swallowed anything it didn't have anywhere to go and the fish would wear himself out swallowing the same meal over and over again.

"Aw, come off," says Bill, "if he can't eat, how does he live to grow up?"

"That's the trouble. They can't eat," I says. "They all starve to death before they can grow up. That's why doughnut fish are so scarce."

Just then we heard a terrible fussing and squawking and we looked across the lake and saw a strange sight. There was a tall, skinny bird, like a crane, and he was walking on the water. It looked like he was standing on two balls, about as big as small footballs, and he

was having a hard time. Like a man on stilts, as long as he kept walking he did pretty well, but soon as he tried to stand still he would lose his balance.

"Well, I'll be dogged!" says Bill. "He's walking on two cocoanut shells."

"No, those ain't cocoanut shells," I says.

"Couldn't be nothing else," says Bill.

"They are his own feet blown up like balloons," I says.

"Naw," says Bill, "he couldn't have balloons for feet because balloons have to be blown up and a bird couldn't blow his feet up like that."

Bill had hardly spoke when we heard a little whistling sound and one of the bird's feet went down like a toy balloon with a leak in it. The bird wabbled around, making an awful racket and trying to stand on one foot. Then his other foot sprung a leak and the bird went clear under the water, then came up again and paddled back to shore where we couldn't see him.

"Well, I'll be dogged," says Bill. "He must have stepped on a tack or something and got a couple of punctures."

"He got punctured all right," I says, "but I couldn't see from here what done it. Let's wait a minute and maybe he'll come back."

Bill said I could hang around until that fool bird found somebody to blow his feet up again, but he was going to find a good place to build a royal hut with a throne in it. I told him he'd better wait for me because if the monkeys or flying dogs got after him he wouldn't know how to hiss like a snake or squawk like the old turtle. Bill said that was easy to do, but when he tried

he couldn't make either sound natural enough to fool a monkey or dog. Then he said he could do it all right after he'd had a little practice.

Bill practised a time or two but he didn't improve any. Then he felt the knot on his head where the cocoanut hit him and said he believed he'd wait for me if I didn't stay long. So he sat down on a rock and began paddling his feet in the water.

We didn't wait long before we saw the bird come walking across the lake toward us. His feet were blown up like they were before and he was walking pretty well. Only he kept looking all 'round like he was scared something was after him. When he got closer I could see it was his own feet he was walking on, and so could Bill.

"Sid," says Bill, "how the dickens did he get his feet fixed again?"

"Well," I says, "there ain't but one way I can figure it out. He is web-footed, like a goose, and he's got a bunch of loose skin under each foot that he blows up."

"Yes," says Bill, "but how does he blow 'em up? And how does he fix a puncture so quick?"

"He's got a hollow toe in each foot," I says, "and he sticks the toe in his mouth and blows 'em up himself. A puncture will close itself because you can stick a pin in living skin and the hole will stop itself up in a minute or two."

While we were talking, the bird had come walking on slow and deliberate, until he wasn't more than twenty feet from us. All of a sudden he saw something in the water and quick as a flash he speared it

with his long bill, his head going clear out of sight. Then he jerked his head up and began dancing 'round like he'd caught something he couldn't get loose from.

We soon saw what was the matter. He'd missed his aim and stuck his bill through the hole in a doughnut fish and the fish had clamped around his bill so he couldn't open it. He was trying to get loose from the fish and the fish was trying to swallow him.

Of all the scuffling 'round you ever saw, that bird done it. He tried to squawk but he couldn't get his bill open. Then he tried to get the fish loose with his foot and lost his balance. Then on top of the trouble he was in, the thing he was scared of got after him. Two tiny little birds, with long, keen bills like hatpins, darted out and started trying to get at his feet. The old bird did the best he could to keep them off, but it wasn't no use. One needle bird punctured one foot and the other needle bird punctured the other foot, and the old bird sunk clear out of sight. We thought he was drowned, but his head came up and he managed to paddle to shore with his stubby little wings.

When the bird got on the rocks the air was all out of his feet so he couldn't use them, and the first thing he did was to reach up with one foot and pull the doughnut fish off his bill; then he gobbled the fish down like a boy swallowing a pill. Soon as he'd eaten the fish he sat down on his tail and put his middle toe in his bill and kept blowing until he'd blown one foot up as big as a cocoanut; then he blew up the other foot the same way and stepped out on the water and started back across the lake. When he was nearly

across, the needle birds got after him again and punctured his feet and down he went again.

It tickled Bill, who ain't so sympathetic as he ought to be, and he threw back his head and let out that awful laugh of his. But he sort of sobered down watching the balloon bird fight to make it to the bank. We thought he'd drown before he could get there.

"Blamed if he don't live a hard life, don't he?" says Bill.

We had about decided to leave the balloon bird to his troubles and go on around the ridge when all of a sudden Bill began pointing out across the lake.

"Look yonder at those two funny lookin' bubbles," he says.

Out on the water, about twenty feet from us, were two reddish-looking bubbles about as big as oranges and about two feet apart. I watched them a minute and then I says:

"Bill, those ain't bubbles."

"What are they?" says Bill.

"They're two eyes and they're watching us," I says. "Look here."

I found a little piece of rock and tossed it toward the two eyes and they went under in a flash, then popped up again in the same place. I told Bill that some kind of strange creature was watching us and he'd better take his feet out of the water and move back. Bill said it couldn't be, because a creature big enough to have eyes like that would be living in the ocean and not in a little pan of water like the lake.

While Bill was talking I saw a green, slimy-looking string floating just under the water toward one of

his feet. I told Bill to move his foot quick, but he said it wasn't nothing but the stem of a water lily floating in the water and reached out his foot to lift it up.

Soon as he touched the thing it wrapped around his ankle and started to pull. Bill let out a scream that made my blood freeze and started to slipping off the rocks into the lake. I caught him by the shoulders and tried to hold him back and Bill tried to kick himself loose with his other foot, but another slimy string floated in and wrapped around both feet. Bill kept screaming for me to save him and we both pulled hard as we could, but those slimy strings kept tightening like steel cables and Bill kept slipping farther and farther into the water. And all the time those bloody-looking eyes out there in the lake were fixed on us.

Two or three times I gave the short, sharp squawk of the old turtle for a halt signal, but it didn't work. Bill kept screaming and slipping farther into the water. When I saw poor Bill was doomed and I couldn't hold him any longer, I had a sudden hunch how I might save him. Quick as a flash I turned him loose and leaned over the edge of the rocks and stuck my head under the water.

When I pulled my head up, Bill was free; but he was so weak and scared I had to drag him back on the rocks and fan him a long time before he got so he could talk. The first thing he said was,

"How did you save me, Sid?"

"Well," I says, "I had to do some fast thinking and I come near getting the right idea too late. I didn't tell you, but the old turtle has been watching us ever since he went across the lake. I saw him standing over yon-

der in the shadow of a rock, and when you started laughing when the balloon bird went down I saw him slip into the water and slip out again."

"And he gave the signal to that thing in the water to get me," says Bill.

"That's what he done," I says.

"How did you get me loose?" says Bill. "You gave the halt signal three times but it didn't do no good."

Then I told Bill that when I made the halt signal in the air the thing had his eyes up but not his ears, and I never figured out until the last second that I ought to make the sound under the water. Soon as I stuck my head under the water and gave a short squawk, the thing turned him loose. That was what the old turtle had done when I saw him slip into the water: he had given the thing the signal to get Bill.

"That means the old turtle ain't got but one halt signal for all kinds of creatures, don't it?" says Bill.

"It looks that way," I says.

Bill perked up right away and began to get cocky again.

"Well," he says, "we're safe now. We've got the old turtle licked on the land and in the water and there ain't nothing for me to do now but go over yonder and kick 'im off the island and take charge."

I told Bill that he ought not to be too hard-hearted and rough with creatures that wasn't as fortunate as he was; that if we were kind to the old turtle we might make friends with him and live at peace with all the strange creatures until we were rescued.

Bill said that sort of kind-hearted stuff was all right for some people but not for him. He said a real king

had to be hard boiled and rule with iron gloves and spiked shoes.

There's no use arguing with a fellow like Bill; so I told him he'd better let the old turtle alone until tomorrow; that he really couldn't be king until he had learned the signals so he could rule the animals himself. I told him the sun was going down and we'd better hustle back and get some cocoanuts for supper and fix a place to sleep near the boat.

Bill said he guessed I was right, but he didn't care much about having cocoanuts again for supper. He said cocoanuts was all right between meals but he didn't crave them as a steady diet. He wished we had some sugar and flour so we could make a cocoanut pie.

I told Bill that wishing wouldn't get him nothing.

"Well, I don't know," says Bill. "I've been wishing I'd be king of a wild island and the wish has come true. And that's a heap bigger wish than wishing for a little flour and sugar."

There's no answer to that kind of argument; so I didn't try to answer. And we walked on back the way we had come.

When we got to the cocoanut trees we could hear the monkeys fussing and chattering until I hissed like a snake; then you couldn't hear a sound. I got two cocoanuts for supper and we started on to where we'd left the flooey birds tied up.

But when we got to where we'd left them we didn't find anything except the string we'd tied them with. The birds were gone.

Bill asked me how they managed to get away and I told him the old turtle had come back and turned

them loose, and I showed him the turtle's tracks in the sand. That made us think about our flag and we both looked out on the beach where we'd left it, but somebody had knocked it down. We went down to the flag and there were the old turtle's tracks.

Bill got mad sure enough then and said to tear down a flag was an act of treason and the old turtle had to die at sunrise the next morning.

I didn't say anything because I thought maybe if Bill got a long night's sleep he would get the king idea out of his head and we wouldn't have any more trouble with the old turtle.

We got a drink of water at the little stream that ran across the beach and went down to the ocean to see that our boat was all right; then we picked some potato fruit and had supper.

After supper we found a good place to sleep on the sand under a tree not far from the boat. Bill laid down on his back and looked up at the stars. After a while he says:

"Sid, what was that *thing* that tried to pull me into the lake?"

"It was an octopus," I says.

"That's what I figured it was," says Bill. "I heard a story about a man once that was pulled into the ocean by an octopus and ate up."

Bill thought awhile; then he asked me how the octopus got in the lake. I told him the old turtle must have caught him in the ocean when he was right young and put him in the lake and trained him to guard the lake.

Bill said we'd have to figure some way to get rid of the octopus because he wanted to use the lake for a royal swimming hole. Still, he said, it might be a good idea to keep the octopus where he was; that kings had all kinds of rare things and he would be the only king in the world that owned a trained octopus.

In a little while the moon came up and Bill sat up and looked all around.

"Gee, this is a peach of an island, ain't it?" he said. "And it looks prettier than ever by moonlight."

I saw Bill was getting ready to start on the king business again and I didn't have nothing to do but to listen; so I didn't say anything.

Bill started out by saying it was hard luck that I couldn't be king, too, but there couldn't be but one king of an island and he said first that he'd be king; so that gave him the right to rule. He said I could call myself "Prince of Flooey," which sounded fine.

I didn't say anything and Bill thought I was satisfied; so he started telling about his throne. He said he would build his throne under the cocoanut trees. He would get a lot of big white rocks from the ridge around the lake and build a throne ten feet high, facing the ocean, and with steps leading up to it. When the first ship came in he would be sitting on the throne with a robe of butterfly wings on and everybody who saw him would be paralyzed with envy.

Then, Bill went on, those who had seen him first would go back home and tell the world about the king of Flooey Island, and when other kings and queens and rich people heard about him they would send him

fine silks and precious jewels and cinnamon and nutmeg and a lot of stuff like that.

I didn't say anything, and Bill's talk kinda died out and everything was still as death. There wasn't a living thing stirring and not a sound—only the wash, wash of the waves on the beach.

In a little while Bill said he guessed he'd better go to sleep so he could get up and kill the old turtle at sunrise. I started to tell Bill that we ought to take turns keeping guard, but I figured it wouldn't be safe to leave Bill on watch; so I thought I'd better sit up all night myself.

Bill went to sleep and I stayed awake a long time, but I didn't see nothing nor hear nothing but the waves. Then the moon got 'way up in the sky and the waves kept up a sleepy kind of "wash, wash," and first thing I knew I was fast asleep.

It seemed like I'd been asleep hardly a minute when something touched my shoulder and shook me. I sat up and opened my eyes and there stood the old turtle and all the animals on the island. The old turtle was pointing across the beach to our boat and the animals were lined up around us, the lines reaching clear to the boat, leaving only a narrow lane for us to walk through. I saw the jig was up; so I woke Bill. He rubbed his eyes and looked around.

"What the Sam Hill?" he says, blinking.

"Sh-ee-e!" I says. "The old turtle's ordering us off the island and he means business."

Bill stood up and looked all around. He saw the two lines of flooey birds and monkeys and flying dogs, and other strange creatures we hadn't seen, and he

was scared stiff. The flooey birds were poking their long bills toward him, the dogs were showing their teeth and growling, and the monkeys were all set to shoot cocoanuts.

"Let's beat it quick," says Bill.

"Wait a minute," I says. "I want to ask the old turtle for a few cocoanuts so we won't starve on the ocean."

I bowed to the old turtle and asked him polite as I could if we could get a few cocoanuts to take with us. The old turtle didn't say anything. He just kept pointing to the boat and all the animals began to edge a little closer.

There wasn't anything to do but leave; so we started. Bill led the way and asked me to follow close so the dogs couldn't grab him from behind. Bill walked skittish and careful and kept shying from side to side like a scared horse. I looked back and saw the old turtle was following behind us like an old man on crutches, and the animals were closing in behind him as he passed.

When we got to the boat we saw it was loaded with cocoanuts; so I turned to the old turtle and bowed and thanked him. Bill never said nothing; he just grabbed hold of the boat and started pushing it into the ocean.

I caught hold of the boat to help Bill and the old turtle touched me on the shoulder. I looked up and the old turtle pointed straight to the northeast the way the wind was blowing.

By that time Bill had the boat in the water and had hold of the oars.

"Come on, Sid, and let the old fool alone," says Bill.

When Bill said that two dogs sailed out after him, but the old turtle called them back. I caught hold of the boat and pushed it out of the shallow water and jumped in.

As we headed for the open sea I looked back and saw the old turtle standing there in the moonlight swinging his body between his arms like a pendulum. Then he put his feet down and opened his mouth and mocked Bill laughing.

Bill never said a word until he'd rowed about a mile out; then he stood up in the boat and shook his fist at Flooey Island.

"Laugh, you old fool turtle," he hollered loud as he could, "but you won't laugh when the king comes back!"

I told Bill that he never would find Flooey Island again and Bill said he would if he lived and the island stayed there.

From that minute Bill never was the same again.

We made a sail of our clothes and put up an oar for a mast and sailed straight to the northeast with the wind. While we were hitting it along at a good clip, I told Bill that he ought not to feel hard toward the old turtle; that he had spared our lives while we were asleep; that he had put cocoanuts in the boat for food and water and had made it plain to me that we would find land if we sailed straight northeast. I told him I had counted the cocoanuts and there were exactly sixty, which meant that, allowing a cocoanut a day for each of us, we should reach land in thirty days.

Bill never said nothing. Day after day we sailed

on with the wind and Bill never talked. He ate his cocoanut every day and just sat there and brooded and brooded like he was a real king who had been run out of his kingdom.

When the thirtieth day came we started looking for land at daylight, but we didn't see any. All day we looked for land ahead but we saw nothing but water; so we divided a cocoanut between us and kept the last cocoanut for the next day.

I told Bill that I still had faith in the old turtle and we would sight land before our food ran out. Bill never said nothing. He just sat there and looked at the ocean.

The next morning we woke up and there was a British ship anchored off a little island right before us. We put our clothes on right quick and rowed alongside the ship. The captain and some sailors let down a rope ladder and we climbed aboard.

We stayed on board the ship all the morning and the captain gave us some real food and water and asked us our names and where we came from. I told him we'd come from Flooey Island and the captain smiled like there wasn't any such island. Then I told the captain and sailors about the strange creatures we'd seen there and they all laughed and laughed and said the cocoanut juice was a bad thing to drink for thirty days.

The captain gave us some clothes and when we went in to dress Bill says:

"Don't be telling them all that stuff about what we saw."

"Why?" I says.

"Because they think you are weak in the noodle," says Bill.

I told Bill I didn't care what people thought; that if a fellow couldn't believe what he saw with his own eyes and have the courage to tell about it he couldn't believe in anything.

Bill said it was all right to believe what we saw but we needn't expect other people to believe it. He said the old turtle had made big enough fools of us already and he didn't want a lot of people laughing behind his back.

After that me and Bill said good-bye. He went ashore to wait for a ship bound for Liverpool that was due in a week. The ship I was on lifted anchor at noon and the captain took me to San Francisco.

On the long trip over, the sailors used to get together on the deck at night and ask me to tell them some more about Flooey Island. Some of them laughed, but I didn't care because I saw what I saw, and a fellow couldn't make up a story like that.

When I got home I made up my mind to begin saving my money. When I have enough I'm going back to the port where we found the ship that brought me home. Then I'm going to buy a little boat and sail southwest for the Island of Flooey. I believe I can find it, and if I do, I have a hunch that the old turtle will be glad to see me.

THE END